



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 118 ©1992. P. O. Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. World Rights Reserved. Artwork and quoted material herein © the artists concerned. Used here for promotional purposes only. \$9 for the next twelve issues. Set of back issues \$ 40 postpaid.

I got a press release from Rip Off Press saying they are breaking with their underground image in '92. I hate to say this but the underground companies haven't been in the avant garde of outrageousness since the late seventies. One serious problem I've been aware of is the closed door underground companies presented to freelance cartoonists. Instead of expanding and welcoming new talent, most of the underground companies either ignored anyone outside the company clique or rejected them for eclectic aesthetic reasons. Robert Crumb originally said he wanted **Zap** to be an open door to experimental cartoonists, but by the third issue that door had closed. Rip Off Press was always a closed group consisting of Gilbert Shelton and his friends from the University of Texas in Austin, but Shelton quickly tired of doing all the drawing board chores himself and soon had Dave Sheridan and others helping him. Of the majors, Ron Turner was probably the only one open to new cartoonists circa 1971-2 and his All New Underground Comix series proved a financial bust. When the Head Shop network went belly up in the early seventies, underground comix reverted to dependency upon mail order and specialty comic book stores and since most of the comic book stores outside the major urban areas made very little money on undergrounds in comparison with

the legal trouble they had with them it was not long before underground comix were mainly a mail order item.

Rip Off Press survived through sales of Shelton's **Freak Brothers** comix. The Print Mint gave up and went back to posters and **Zap** went to Last Gasp, but comix sales did not sustain Ron Turner's company and he diversified into book production. Comix did not keep Krupp alive either. Denis Kitchen turned to nostalgic reprints of the work of artists like Wil Eisner, Al Capp, Milton Caniff, and Ernie Bushmiller to keep his company in the black. Nor could straight comix keep a company like Fantagraphics afloat. Gary Groth began publishing pornographic comics under the Eros logo in the eighties.

As 1992 commences, the comic book business, like other enterprises in what is for many people a serious depression, is likely to take some hard licks. Few people can afford the inflated prices on the new books. I think video is taking a bite out of all print-oriented businesses and, let's face it, there are way too many comic books on the shelves. A lot of companies are going down the tubes very soon just as they did at the end of the forties. Disney just found out that parents have their limits where high-priced comic books are concerned and I suspect the scales are about to fall from the eyes of some of the other fledgling companies.

I got a pair of Jim Siergey's **Culture Vultures** and I have them sitting near the piano when I practice my sonatas. Great little characters. I recommend you give them as gifts to all your intellectual friends. See the ad on this page for details. -Clay

Robert Pasternak: The Imagery of his Work, a unique little 5x7" folio is \$4.95 from him at 291 Rupertsland Ave., Wpg., Man., Canada R2V 0G5.

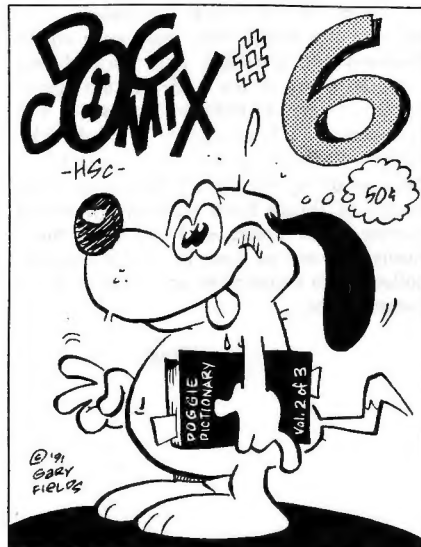
It's all right to produce comics purely for collectors, but in order to do this it is necessary to turn the majority of the buyers into collectors. To do so is to say goodbye to the casual reader.

Selling comic books is a tricky business. Each generation is programmed to hate what the last generation loved. Why? To increase sales and prevent hand-me-downs? If the children of sixties hippies loved the comix their parents read, they wouldn't have to go out and buy any new ones. TV has proven very successful at selling artificial rebellion. All children are now expected to rebel against their parents at puberty. We live in an era of gonadotrophic rebellion! A boy plays ball with his Dad, reads his old comic books, and wants to be like him until puberty then all of a sudden like the twang of Axel Rose's guitar string the boy thinks his dad is just a dumb hippie who doesn't know where it's at. Who does know? *The companies with all of those new rebel products to sell.* I loved it last summer when they had the rebels running around in coveralls with one of the straps hanging down. That was almost as good a way to get at an anal Mom as having half your head shaved and the other half vegetable dyed a purplish pink.

To become a parent is to have a gigantic load of corporate crapola dumped in your lap the minute your kid hits puberty. It might surprise some of you young parents to know that 'twas not always thus. Was a time when kids grew up respecting their parents and tried to do something worthy of the respect of their communities.

So Rip Off Press, to return to my first paragraph, is dumping its underground image and going for a wider audience; well, I think this is likely to be a futile effort unless the company figures out a way to produce comic books that not only appeal to a readership but cost a lot less than they do now. My local store carries a couple of hundred titles on the shelves and thousands in the back issue bins and I don't see how anyone has the time or energy even to *look* at all of them. I suspect more people stand around and read them than buy them. A friend informed me that a comic book store on Haight Street in San Francisco was closing for this reason, more readers than buyers.

Gary Fields' **DOG COMIX** marches on. #6 is 50¢/stamp from Randy Paske, Gilbert, MN 55741-9631. Gary's first standard comic book came out late last year. **SUPERSWINE** from Caliber Press. Check your local store. I love the funny animal tradition in comics and am always happy to see young cartoonists carrying it on for a new generation.



Dear Clay--

Just about every week when I go to the comic store for my hit, I find two or three old tired out superheroes on the covers of Marvel and DC comics. These are usually Number One issues with the publishers' proclamation spread across the cover that they are Collectors' items. A few weeks later these comics are gone. Poof! Cancelled. Am I wrong to think there might be a conspiracy to loot the young collector's wallet here?

-Burned in Berkeley



Dear Uncle Clay,

Is it possible to have a complete collection of underground comix?

-Jack Burrows

Dear Jack,

No. There are a handful of underground collectors around and I have want lists from most of them which indicates that they do not have complete collections. I say No because underground comix were regional in nature, published all over the country, hey, all over the world; they were very big in England and Germany and Spain. Being regional many of the underground comix were never distributed outside the community. I have copies of books like FARK COMIX and FOLK FUNNIES because of my newsletter. People sent me copies of things from all over the world during the seventies, so I had these, but I rarely saw any of them in local stores. My collection is incomplete and I know of no complete one.

-Clay

Dear Clay--

My baby sister keeps getting into my stash of Zap Comix and giving me the old shame on you finger for being a collector of rank porn. I've told her the Underground box is off limits and she should get back to her Barbies, but she persists in running up and down the front walk with ZAP 4 in her hand open to the Joe Blow story while she blows the little neck whistle Mom brought home from her local Women Against Violence Against Women rap group. It's not so bad that my sister is becoming an anti-sex feminist, because that's what's happening with her gender these days, right, but she keeps getting all my underground comix out of order and I have to sort the whole box every other day or so. What can I do to keep the little dweeb under control?

-Sexually harassed in Tuscon.

Dear S.H.I.T.,

You need a bag of Zaploc® Kidsisterproof Comic bags. These heavy-duty see through asbestos bags are guaranteed to keep even the cleverist little kid out of your private comix stash. Once you have put each comic in a Zaploc® bag and clipped the bag to a durable chain strung across the top of your room a couple of inches below the ceiling, you can sit back and relax, secure in the knowledge that no little kid will ever be able to get at your personal sex comix again!

Should the Zaploc® bag fail for some reason, you can always smack the little pest along side the head with it and your comix will be safe and sound. Until she gets out of intensive care, at least.

Dear Uncle Clay--

I've heard Underground comix called a sixties fad, something that came and went in a couple of years. Would you say this is an accurate comment?

--Darrell Martin

Dear Darrell--

Of course not. Underground comix are still being published in 1992. Would you call Marvel Comics a forties fad? A fad is something that was and isn't like the hula hoop of the fifties. The major companies that published underground comix in the sixties and seventies are still around. They just don't do a lot of publicity. Krupp, Rip Off Press, and Last Gasp Comix are still there. You can write to them just as you can to Marvel or National.

Dear B. I. B.,

You sound like an observant Trekkie with your shields intact. Comic books are nothing but products to the big companies and the way to sell products is to promote them on prime time and sell the suckers. This is corporate America here, pal. Those Number One collectables have as much value as sugar coated cereals and plastic action figures. It's the brand name game. Would corporations cheat the customer? Of course. Anything to increase the bottom line. Today's comic reader gets less story and more ads than any other time in history. If you get story with no ads you pay dearly through increased cover prices. This technique has been used with all products. The bag of candy you get in the grocery store used to contain a pound, 16 ounces, so you paid so much for the pound. In 1991, the amount of candy in that bag went down to 14 ounces, but the bag appeared to be the same and the price was the same so most customers assumed they were getting the pound of candy they always got. The customer was never informed that the amount in the bag had gone down and was, quite simply, ripped off by the company. All perfectly legal, because the amount is printed in tiny type somewhere on the bag and all of us have nothing to do but read every label on every product we have grown to trust over the years.

Uncle Clay says yes, the corporations will cheat the consumer and yes, the comic book companies are cheating the younger comic buyer with manufactured collectors' items which are worthless the second the buyer walks out the door.

If it is rare, it is collectable. Wartime comics or Golden Age comics became valuable because most of the copies were recycled through paper drives and only a few remain extant in nice condition. None of the mass produced books of the past couple of decades have any real collector value. Collecting is now a business organized so that the major companies, their distributors, and the retail comic book stores make the profits.

Uncle Clay says if a comic book is proclaimed a collectors' item by the publisher, it isn't worth collecting. Learn to see hype for what it is.

And collect what you really like. Unless you intend to go into the comic book business, why bother collecting what everyone else is collecting? If you really want to make money with comics, you will have to seek out what is rare and compete with other hunters in order to get it and resell it. In the long run, collections of Undergrounds, Newaves, and Alternative comics will be unique and rare while collections of Marvel and DC and Disney comics will be common.



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COMIX PLUGOLA

The logo for this issue was drawn by Robert Pasternak.

This Month's Special is a little package of Comix Wave Minicomix. If you're new and wonder what these newwave comix were all about, send me \$3.50 and I'll mail you a dozen. Over 18 only. C.G.

WONDER CON 6

Wonder Con is coming up April 24-26 at the Oakland Convention Center. The Con hotel is the Park Oakland [510-893-1234] and Con info is available from Bryan Unlenbrock who is coordinating guests and programming. An SASE will get you a progress report. 5440 Morrow Dr., San Pablo, CA 94806. I'll be attending the con on the weekend. C.G.

TWISTED IMAGE 37 continues the wit and madness of Ace Backwards. Like me, Ace talks about whatever comes into his head and draws comic strips which often have to do with the decline and fall of the American Empire. I always get a few laughs out of Ace's newsletter, so check out a copy. Send him a buck. 1630 University Avenue, Apt. 26, Berkeley, CA 94703.

Dave Sim was in Berkeley signing his work at Comic Relief on January 18. Copies of **CEREBUS 153** were on sale along with four reprint collections of Sim's work.

Trade your zine for the latest **MAGPIE**. From David Doyle, 5294 Tobin St., #12, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3H 1S2.

I see tv commercialism is moving into a new phase. Advertising has infiltrated just about everything to the extent that it has become unpleasant to watch. Who wants to be bombarded with constant product hype? I turned on the ice skating finals Saturday afternoon. They were sponsored by a diet drink and an artificial sweetener, products aimed at the ignorant who think that is the way weight is lost. Giant ads for these products were pasted on one side of the arena so that each time the skater went around the viewer got another glimpse of both ads. This is a tachistoscopic technique and the result is an hour-long commercial. To further rub it in, a short commercial for the soft drink was played several times during the program. This ad within the larger ad featured ice skaters happily swilling down the useless product. Every time I saw the product swing by I got more and more disgusted and I finally gave it up and turned the show off. Here is an interesting situation, huh? If I were to buy the video of this ice skating show in order not to see any commercials I would still be subjected to the ads.

I am opposed to having products associated with sports and am particularly upset by the current trend to associate unhealthy and dangerous products with what ought to be healthy activities. Beer is a dangerous drug that kills more teenagers every year than heroin ever did, yet it has become impossible to watch a football game without being subjected to a lot of fraudulent advertising aimed directly at teenagers. The advertiser assumes, probably correctly, that the adults are already hooked so there is no reason to aim advertising at them. The core of these commercials is the idea that you are a good sport if you drink and that drinking will make you muscular and beautiful, *real* men and women. The truth is drinking will simply make you act like a stupid clod, one whose judgment other people will consider questionable. Using this or that product isn't going to prove your manliness or womanliness, it's just going to type you as a conformist afraid to assert your individuality.

Paul Krassner's **THE REALIST** is still alive. \$2 from him, Box 1230, Venice, CA 90274. The latest is #119 on the cover of which Murphy Brown has her baby.

EL VIBORA 143 is \$9 pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. **KISS #2**, the new Spanish sex comic is in the same format and for the same price. Both magazines contain R. Crumb stores in Spanish.

"I was taken to the movies once but I screamed in such terror at the cartoon that showed the aeroplanes with teeth like sharks tearing at each other in the sky that mother was forced to take me outside. Then I wept so unconsolably that I was never taken to a cinema again."

Germaine Greer

Daddy We Hardly Knew You, 1969.

Whatever happened to **The Nebbishes**? Why do we never see any reprints? Who is suppressing these characters and why? A conspiracy? The Nebbishes preceded Dan O'Neill's talking potatoes, the **Odd Bodkins**—could it be that the Bodkins offed the Nebbishes in a secret plot and destroyed all memory of their existence? Does anyone out there collect Nebbish strips?

THE RETURN OF THE SHMOO

The Shmoo has returned. I was a teenager when Al Capp did the series of Shmoo strips and I remember all of the stories about these little creatures who could become anything anyone needed anytime they needed it. There were Shmoo bars at Harold's where we hung out and played the Old Faithful pinball machine in 1948. In a department store in Lincoln, Nebraska I found a giant Shmoo balloon fixed to a pair of cardboard feet. My brother and I had a good time punching this Shmoo around our room. There were a few Shmoo comic books, but Capp sold the rights to someone; the art wasn't his.



If you are curious about the life of Alfred Gerald Caplin who turned himself into Al Capp when he became a pro cartoonist, you might look at the recent collection of his essays, **My Well Balanced Life on a Wooden Leg**, introduced by John Updike for John Daniel & Company, Santa Barbara, 1991. Capp tells the story of the fatal haircut in the title essay. For him everything changed on August 21, 1919, when he was given fifty cents to get a haircut and decided to hitch a ride on the back of an ice wagon and save some of the money to spend for something else. When Capp hopped off the back of the wagon in front of the barber shop he fell in the path of a moving trolley car and his left leg was severed at the thigh. There was no micro-surgery at that time and Capp was doomed to lived out his life with a wooden leg. This became a focal point for him and while the essays have a bit to do with his development as a cartoonist, they focus mostly on his misadventures as a one-legged boy limping through puberty.

Capp was nine when he lost his leg. He lived seventy years, dying in 1979. His strip **L'il Abner** began in 1934, the year I was born, so I grew up with Capp's humor. The musical which came out in the late fifties was great [out on tape now] and Capp's influence may be detected in many areas from the Ma and Pa Kettle movies to the Beverly Hillbillies tv series. There was a theme park in Kentucky called Dogpatch, USA, but I don't know if it is still open. All of the **L'il Abner** reprint books are still available in local comic book stores or from Kitchen Sink. The Shmoo book is scheduled for March of 1992.

Comedy is the public version of a private darkness. The funnier it is the more one must speculate on how much terror lies hidden.

—Paul Theroux
My Secret History

Dear Clay--

I found some old underground comix in a box in our garage and someone told me they were worth a lot of money these days. Is there some way I can find out what these comix are worth?

-Hank Gooch

Hank--

Jay Kennedy did a price guide for underground and newave comix back in 1983, but this book is long out of print and the prices would not be relevant to the current market. Have you checked at your local comic book store to see if they have any undergrounds on sale? Quite frankly, there are only a few serious underground comix collectors and most of them have all the common titles. It is possible you have some first editions in that box if it dates back to the late sixties or early seventies and if you have there may be a little gold there, but not much. Name me some of the titles and I'll give you an estimate, but I've had very little mail re undergrounds lately. Comic collecting has always depended a lot on continuity and the undergrounds, with a couple of exceptions, were seldom continuous. Most were one shots, here one day and gone forever the next. Zap and The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers came out about every two or three years, too far apart to stimulate many collectors. Since most of the more popular undergrounds have been reprinted again and again for the past twenty years, only the first editions have more than token monetary value. I think if there was a lot of serious underground collecting going on, one would see evidence of it at the conventions and that is not the case. Many dealers don't even bother to bring their underground boxes these days and there is a message there.

Dear Uncle Clay--

I read that underground comix were suppressed in the mid-seventies because they were filled with sex and violence. Is there any truth to that?

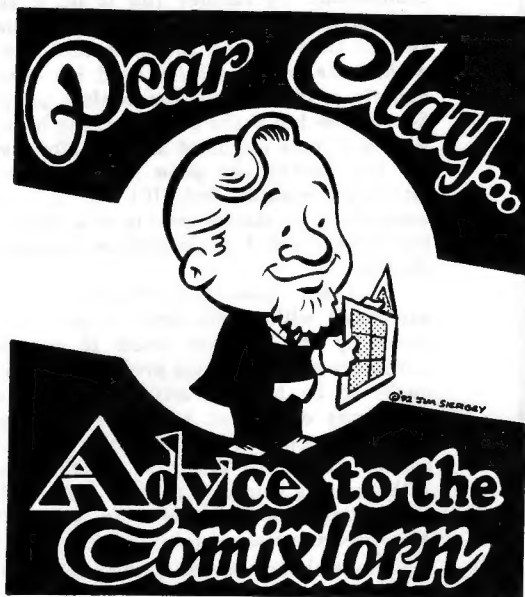
-Harlan Neuwelt

Dear Harlan--

I love this sex' and violence crapola, don't you? There are several thousand underground comix and if you page through them you will find that only a few dwell on sex and violence and in most of these the sex and violence is dealt with in a humorous and satirical manner. Sales of underground and alternative comix began to slide in the mid-seventies due to inflation and those in the business by that time were forced to shift their focus to other areas or quit the game. I'm not saying there was no suppression of comix because I know this happened in both England and America, but I think economics played a bigger role than politics. How this happened is interesting. Many underground comix publishers were distributing the bulk of their comix through head shops, specialty stores that dealt in drug paraphernalia. These stores were

forced to close during the period, hence underground comix sales dropped off. What happened to the comix was a side effect of what happened to the head shops. The majority of underground comix have had very little trouble with either local or national suppression since people don't pay that much attention to comic books. The most busted comic is still ZAP 4.

-Clay



Dear Clay,

I can't seem to get all these things straight and I need help. What is the difference between Underground and Newave Comix? What is a minicomic? What does Ground-level mean [I saw this on an old copy of Star*Reach.]?

-Sam Siggers

Dear Sam,

Back in the early sixties, there was a comics establishment, mostly based in the Eastern part of the United States. This consisted of several major companies, namely, Marvel, National [DC, for Detective Comics, their first big seller], Charlton, Archie, and EC, for Entertaining Comics, by then doing Mad Magazine, which existed in comic book format from 1952-4. On MAD #16, Harvey Kurtzman ran a little mock news item that said "Comics Go Underground," which was a reference to the effect of Fredric Wertham's PTA attacks on comic books and juvenile crime. Kurtzman was implying that comic books would soon be sold by shady characters in overcoats on subway platforms or perhaps out of the suitcases of travelling salesmen a la the Tiajuana Bibles. Robert Crumb probably saw this little item and used the idea when he drew ZAP COMIX in 1967; in any case, Crumb referred to himself as an underground cartoonist, hence the term Underground comix.

As a little time passed, many other artists began to draw their own books and to publish and distribute them from wherever they happened to be. This broke the Eastern monopoly on comic books for a time and soon any comic book published outside the Eastern Establishment was called an underground or alternative comic book. The term alternative came into use when some new publishers realized that the term underground was being associated mainly with erotic or pornographic comics, but it meant that the publisher was putting out what he considered an alternative to Eastern superhero comics as well as an alternative to the sexually-oriented undergrounds. Alternatives are often referred to as black and whites by comic store employees.

Newave comix came along in the late seventies and was a term borrowed from the rock music of the time. The idea of a new wave of art or literature or poetry has been around for many years. I first heard it used in relation to poetry in North Beach during the Beatnik period in the late fifties. It was used in relation to certain French films during the same time, mainly those of François Truffaut. When I began publishing minicomic in 1978, I did not use the term newave on these little books. I think it was George Erling who used it, but he may have gotten it somewhere else. Minicomic came into usage in reference to four, eight, and sixteen pagers, self-published, usually by xerox, and sold for anywhere from a dime to a couple of dollars. I charged 50¢ because I decided there weren't worth the bother for any less. Many cartoonists were involved in these little quickies and all have their own point of view about them. Many considered what they were doing a continuation of the freedom of art and thought that arose during the initial period of underground activity circa 1969.

Ground-level was a term Michael Friedrich made up for his Star*Reach comics. He wanted to distinguish what he was doing from undergrounds and East Coast books and he decided that his books were at a midpoint or ground-level between the extremes represented by the other companies. Most of the time, he used the idea of alternative comics. This was the term that held on in the eighties to denote black and white comics with color covers run by non-East Coast companies. Companies like Eternity, Dark Horse, and Brave New Words fall into this category.

Most of the terms refer to the format of the comic books rather than the content, but underground and erotic comix continue to have a sexual connotation for most fans. In the sixties, we referred to underground comix as hip and any other comics as straight.

No comix exist in a vacuum and any historian can show a pattern of development from the days of Winsor McCay and Bud Fisher to Robert Crumb and Gilbert Shelton. One of the strongest immediate influences on Underground and the subsequent Newave comix was Mad Magazine with EC horror and Quality Comics a close second.

--Clay

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THE COMPLETE CRUMB is up to volume 8, which tome deals with Crumb's rise to fame and his subsequent murder of Fritz the Cat which is depicted on the cover. The latest Crumb drawings published in this country appeared as illos in the **ANDERSON VALLEY ADVERTISER** in February of 1992. The drawings were done to go along with Warren Hinckle's coverage of the trial of Jim Mitchell for the murder of his brother, Artie. Jim was found guilty of manslaughter and had not been sentenced when this was written. Other artists whose illos appeared with the running coverage are Harry S. Robins, Dan O'Neill, and Spain Rodriguez. The last few issues of **AVA** ran new **Odd Bodkins** strips. **Odd Bodkins** was a popular strip which ran in the San Francisco **CHRONICLE** in the early 1960s.

Dave Sim's **CEREBUS 154** continues **MOTHERS** and **DAUGHTERS**. The reprint series continues with #24 now in the stores.

Steve Willis sent me the latest **CITY LIMITS GAZETTE**. It's \$15 a year from him at POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390.

Richie Prosch returns with **FARMBOY FUNNIES 1**. 50¢/stamp from him at 305 Pinehaven 44, Laurens, SC 29360. Richie was a contributor to the **Comix World Mini-Series** in the early 1980s.

TERRORESS 3 is \$3.50 pp from Tom Roberts, 333 S. East Ave., #209, Oak Park, IL 60302.

Joe Matt has published some of his early stuff under the title **PEEP SHOW**. You can write to Joe at 23 Albany Ave., Toronto, Ont., Canada M5R 3C2.

An **SASE** will get you a free catalog of stuff offered by **Horn Farm**, 1463 E. Republican, Suite 189, Seattle, WA 98112.

EL VIBORA 144 is \$10 from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Contains a Spanish reprint of a Crumb sex story, and lots of interesting Spanish art.

Dan Clowes was in Berkeley to sign some **EIGHTBALLS** on February 24. Clowes uses the Crumb technique in his work. You anticipate any possible criticism and ward it off by assimilating it into your own work. The idea is no one can say anything about you that you haven't already said about yourself. I enjoy the way Clowes work drifts in and out of sanity. His short critique of life in art school hit the mark. I saw all of that behavior at the San Francisco Art Institute when I hung out in George Kuchar's filmmaking class back in 1970.



Sonic Tales is 50¢/ stamp from Greg Petix, 2128 N. Winchester, Chicago, IL 60614. minicomic.

Desertions at Mighty Marvel?

Eight of Marvel's top people have gone over to Malibu Graphics. Lee and Chris Claremont, Rob Liefeld, Erik Larsen, Todd McFarlane, Whilce Portacio, Marc Silvestri, and Jim Valentino.

Programs are the things around ads.
--Dennis Potter

When Bill Ward did **Torchy** for Quality in the old days, the stories had to fit the morality of the times, but it's 1992 now and Ward is free to do her any way he wants to. The result is **SCORCHY** and the first issue is out under the Forbidden Fruit label. For men who like big tits and sexual innuendo, for bottle babies who miss Little Annie Fanny, here is blatant sexism at its best. If you can't find a copy locally, send \$4 to FF, 1565 Cliff Road, Suite 3-450, St. Paul, MN 55122. I suspect it would be a good idea to send an age statement.

He finally came to the realization that logic might do for method but not for motive. Again, to use the analogy of creative art, the artist thought out the techniques of his art, or learned them from others and, with patience, became a skilled craftsman. But where craft ended and art began was at the point where the artist had to draw on his own emotions, dreams, fervors and fears, penetrating deep into himself to uncover what he needed to express by his skill.

Lawrence Sanders
The First Deadly Sin

Cerebus marches on. #155 continues "Mothers and Daughters." Issues 75 and 76 have been reprinted. Dave Sim is touring. He will be in Denver April 12, in Chicago, April 26, and in Miami on May 3. See your local comic store for details.

Comic Relief is opening a new store. 1597 Haight Street in San Francisco. Opening celebration on March 15, 1992.

TURN OFF, TUNE OUT, DROP IN

Spy Magazine tells me that LSD is back. Did it ever leave? Talking to someone who is on acid is like swimming in a vat of rainbow jello. Far out, man, like, you're rilly groovy, man, I mean like you're a beautiful dude, like. I was at a party in Fresno back in 1967 and saw a guy spend the entire evening staring at the D on a Decca record. Boy, was his consciousness expanded. It was **Drugspeak** everywhere in those days. No matter where you went, you heard people talking about their trips and trips other people were taking, how mescaline did this and psilocybin that and it was all very tedious and boring, particularly to someone like me who was not into drugs and could have cared less. No one knew anything about **MK-ULTRA** then. If you had said that the CIA was conducting an experiment in mind control and using the Eloi around Haight-Ashbury as guinea pigs you would have been written off as one of those conspiracy theorists. LSD was just the latest high to most people, but many were messianic about it. There were brand names to separate the best from the worst and everyone knew the difference between bad street acid and primo Owsley, even non-druggies like me. The Purple Haze that fell in Jimi Hendrix' brain was LSD, so were the pills that made you larger or smaller in the song *White Rabbit* sung by Grace Slick and the sunshine that came softly through Donovan Leitch's window. Drug music was ubiquitous and it was often performed by the stoned for the stoned. Interns showed up at parties with amyl nitrate capsules and told the gaping guests that breaking one and inhaling at the moment of orgasm was the ultimate high. Drug lore was present in hundreds of magazines and underground newspapers.

LSD was made illegal in October of 1966 and within a couple of months the hippy dealers were gone from Haight Ashbury and the mafia dealers were busy killing anyone who was left. Seventeen murders. Street paranoia. Drug profits had financed a lot of hip boutiques and marginal businesses then as now and the acid-rich bought upscale homes in Marin County and spent their days leisurely discussing megadeals on their boats or in the fern bars along Bridgeway in Sausalito. A lot of these neo-rich segued from

psychedelics into serious coke habits and private sanitariums and drug rehab clinics entered boom times as you can read about in the writings of Bret Easton-Ellis and Carrie

Fisher. Acid, alas, did not film well, and movies like Peter Fonda's *The Trip*, heavily hyped, were bombs. *Easy Rider*, now cultic, is a basic bore, though the music is nice. Today's computer generated imagery like the melting steel villain in *Terminator II* is more psychedelic; so is MTV with its high speed cuts, multiple-images, and spontaneous collage.

As for Timothy Leary, the high priest of acid, the guru, the pied piper of LSD, he left a legacy of anger and disappointment.² Kids ran away to follow him and their parents hated his guts. Leary told people to turn on, tune in, and drop out, to stop playing social games, to create a better society, but the uneducated kids who heard him never created anything of value. They dropped out and spent their time stoned. They became worshippers of rock bands and spent hours stringing beads or drawing chalk pictures on the sidewalks while the police state grew up around them. Haight-Ashbury became a psychedelic ghetto, a kind of grandiose mental institution a la Ken Kesey's Cuckoo's Nest³ where any and all kinds of aberrant behavior were not only accepted but encouraged. The media used this pool of psychosis to terrify a conservative public of rejected parents into voting for law and order fascists like Nixon, Reagan, and Bush. Television effectively brainwashed the elderly into hating their own children since to the straight media beatniks, hippies, black militants, dropouts, etc., were all negatives the way punks, spikers, and skinheads are now.

So, gee, LSD is back! Why not? It was effective in defusing the revolutionary energy of the young in the sixties and will probably be just as effective this time around. Kids will be dropping acid and watching DESERT STORM II this summer as a new crop of fascists are voted into office to protect scared parents from the ravages of their Easter egg headed, nose-ring wearing kids. Kids who have no folk singing prophets to light their way. Few would believe that decrepit and pathetic figure mumbling his way through a recent gig on David Letterman's 10th Anniversary Special was worshipped as a hippy Messiah in the sixties. Remember that old chestnut about those who fail to learn from history being destined to repeat it? Well, in an electronic environment, history repeats itself continuously, so here's your gold watch and the shackles for your chain and may the ghost of electricity howl in the bones of your face.

-C.G.



Dear Unca Clay--

My problem is with women. I'm 24 years old, and I think mature for that age. but whenever I approach women, they either laugh, run away screaming in terror, or ignore me. It can't be my looks, because at 5'3" I'm only 350 pounds and my penis is 2 inches long when erect, which my mother tells me is normal.

What I'd like to know is, could my being a comic collector have something to do with it? All my collector friends have a similar problem. Now, has reading comics done something horrible to me, or do I collect comics because there is something wrong with me in the first place? And if it was collecting comics which caused me to be a hopeless dweeb, and I sue Marvel, what are my chances of winning?

--Lester P. Buttuzzle

Hi Les--

I don't know what your Mama is doing talking about your erections, but I suspect this is the root of your problem and comic collecting a mere side effect. If that dear lady thinks two inches is normal then she was been missing out which adds up to a lot of years of frustration. A feminist, is she?

Relax and accept yourself, Les. Don't be upset by contemporary fattism. After all, John Candy and Rosanne Barr have done all right for themselves and I suspect they have a history of comic-book reading. I think if you continue to be a loyal member of the comics community you will find the chairgirl of your dreams.

² See Timothy Leary, **FLASHBACKS**. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1983. Leary did a previous book about his work called **HIGH PRIEST**.

³ Ken Kesey's 1962 novel, **ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST**, was the in psychedelic novel of the period. He wrote it after taking LSD and subsequently went on a crusade to try to turn everyone on to the drug. His album was called **THE ACID TEST**. Tom Wolfe wrote up his adventures in **THE ELECTRIC KOOL-AID ACID TEST**.

As for comic book reading being the cause of your problem, who can say? Read a lot of Baby Hueys as a boy? Find yourself more interested in the elephants than in Mowgli when **THE JUNGLE BOOK** came out on video last year? Get an erection when the Hulk roars and turns into the Jolly Green Giant?

If your dweebitude has interfered with your ability to make a living, you might sue Marvel for financial loss, but remember in any lawsuit the defendant has the right to delve deeply into the plaintiff's personal life and would you really want all that stuff about your weird mother to appear on the six o'clock news in Fuzzerville, Nebraska?

Hey, good luck, big guy.

-Uncle Clay

A SAMPLE OF MUSIC CRITICISM FROM THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN, SEPT. 12, 1990

On their third effort, *The Right Thing*, Chemical People play abrasive, trashy pop in the tradition of The Adolescents, Decendents and Social Distortion, with an (un)healthy obsession with pornography and comic book violence thrown in for good measure. Actually, for a band so willfully stupid and sexist (their last two albums featured porn starlets on their covers), Chemical People exhibit a striking knowledge of musical history--that is, if we assume that music began in, say, 1977, with Generation X. A tune such as *The Duck Song* straddles several musical genres at once, incorporating Minor Threat-type tempo changes, grinding metal riffs and perfect pop-punk choruses; at the same time, the group manages to avoid both cliché hardcore anger and maudlin pop sensitivity. Of course, no one will ever accuse Chemical People of being a bunch of intellectuals. You can't understand their lyrics, and basically, Chemical People exist to bang them out hard and fast--like it's supposed to be done.

L. A. Kanter.

By the way did you know the Reverend Thomas Malthus appears as Mr. Fax in Thomas Love Peacock's *McLincoort* [1817]?

HAPPY EASTER!

There were so many horrible things to be afraid of--God, the Easter Bunny, the nuns. . . I hated Easter. I didn't want God to get himself crucified all over again--certainly not for my sake! I just wanted Him to leave me alone and not be everywhere, watching everything I did. I thought the Easter Bunny was a monster ten feet tall, wearing a man's dress suit, and carrying a basket full of presents. No wonder I lay there, not daring to breathe, trying not to sweat, listening to every tiny sound until morning came (19). Then morning would come and mother would come into my room cheerfully announcing that the Easter Bunny had been there and left me a present. No amount of chocolate eggs was worth the suffering (20).

-Carroll Baker.
BABY DOLL. 1983.

¹ For the complete details on the CIA's covert use of LSD, see Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain's **ACID DREAMS: THE CIA, LSD, AND THE SIXTIES REBELLION**, Grove Press, New York: 1985.



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 121

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EL VIBORA 145 is \$10 from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Contains a Spanish reprint of a Gilbert Shelton story, and lots of interesting Spanish art. The emphasis is on erotica, adventure, and violence. **KISS COMIX 4** is \$10 from the same address, a fairly new title which is all erotica.

To those people who keep asking when I am going to do a book, the newsletter is already a book 714 pages long and it grows two pages longer per month. Have them bound and stick it on the shelf. I've gone through a book with a friend of mine and it was a thankless project. If I do put all of these letters together in book form I will desktop publish it and sell the copies as they are ordered.

I went to a retrospective of the art of **Pat Ryan** at the Center Art Center in Healdsburg, California. Pat's Indian paintings, album art, and some early comic strips were on display. The show will run from April 5 through May 2. 223 Center Street. For info, call 707-433-9364.

FAT FREDDY'S CAT 7 will be out this June.

For a copy of **PROPAGANDA WAR 12**, send a 29¢ stamp to Clark Dissmeyer, 2313 Central Ave, Kearney, NE 68847.

Penguin's latest is a book of cartoons by S. Gross, **YOUR MOTHER IS A REMARKABLE WOMAN**.

We live in a world of frightful givens. It is given that you will behave like this, given that you will care about that. No one thinks about the givens. Isn't it amazing? In the information society, nobody thinks. We expected to banish paper, but we actually banished thought.

**Michael Crichton
JURASSIC PARK, 1990.**

Dear Clay,

Why do people collect comics? My brother's side of the room is full of boxes of comics. He puts them all in plastic bags and keeps lists of them in a little notebook. He's always looking through them to make sure he hasn't missed an issue of X-Men or something. I read a comic book once in awhile but when I finish with it I toss it away. Any thoughts on this?

Terence L. Taylor

Dear Terry,

Some thoughts, but no final answers.

I collect, therefore I am. When I look at an early issue of Plastic Man or Captain Marvel or Uncle Scrooge, my eight-year-old self smiles with satisfaction. I think most older collectors have this impulse. They find something from childhood and that leads to something else and soon they are recreating their childhood surroundings via the artifacts--comic books, dolls, baseball cards, movie star photos. I think everyone collects something, though many deny it and don't recognize what they do as collecting. I had an aunt who collected shoes, blouses, and butterfly pins. She bought a new blouse the way I buy a comic book. My mother collected teacups and saucers. As I've written elsewhere, I collected everything when I grew up. I even had a jar of cicada shells that turned up missing after one of my mother's cleaning raids. I would still collect everything if I had the money and the space.

But not all collectors are alike. We all share the collecting syndrome, but it manifests itself in different ways. Some collectors do it for show. They want people to know what they have and they often start stores, galleries, or museums to flaunt their booty in the public eye. Other collectors are inhibited and shy and may even buy under fake names or through third parties. People who collect erotica often fall in this category. John Edgar Hoover collected pornography, but who knew anything about that until well after his death? Most of us are in the middle of these extremes. I know people who would like to show off what they have accumulated, but are a little too private to do it. I doubt that there is a dealer anywhere who isn't a collector. In comics, everyone I know is a little of both.

Collecting has nothing to do with money in the beginning. Kids don't think about money. I used to collect pop bottle caps. Little chump I was. The coke bottles from that era now sell for \$30 to 50, but when I was a boy *Depression Glass* meant a nickel back on the bottle. I collected marbles and played against other kids to try to win more of them. I had aggies and tiger's eyes and steelies that I valued far beyond what my dad paid for them at the five and dime uptown. No, the impulse to collect comes along long before any understanding of money. The most useless collection I ever saw was in the house of one of my nephew's aunts. She had died the week before and we were over there picking up something and he told me to come upstairs. In this one back room his aunt, an elementary teacher all her life, had kept

every single art activity her kids had ever done. She had paper chains and finger paintings and more badly drawn valentines than I had ever seen in one place. The place was a complete firetrap and the collection was worth nothing--to anyone but her. I'm sure all her life she was quite proud of it and often sat up there in that rocker looking at this or that and smiling.

I know what motivates a collector, Terry, the desire to hang on to something that somehow defines who you are or who you were, but I don't pretend to understand people like you who throw comic books away after reading them. I've had arguments with people who say it's a matter of things versus people. Or the tangible versus the intangible. I always found it interesting that Greg Irons professed Buddhism, because I was in his house in Berkeley many times and he had a lot of nonspiritual tangible junk collected there. If he had given up the things of this world for the life of the spirit, I never noticed it.

No, I really do not understand the noncollector mind, because I do not remember a time in my own life when I didn't collect and try to hang on to anything that came my way.

-Uncle Clay

Dear Uncle Clay,

I'm getting older and have decided I would like to donate my collection of comics to a museum. Can you recommend one?

Rod McCormack

Dear Rod--

There are a number of museums that accept comic books and comic art collections these days. There are also archives in several universities. I would have to know what kind of comics you have and what you have in mind for them before I could be specific, but you should know that donating a collection does not mean anything will be done with it. If you see in your mind's eye your collection displayed in glass cases and nice frames for the public to admire daily, you are likely to be disappointed. A museum is like any other organized institution, a group of people who are into various things that interest them. If your interests and theirs coincide, you might be happy donating what you have, if not you could be very disappointed. If your collection is sitting in a spare room or basement, it could wind up sitting in the basement of a museum as well.

Ideally, you should go and see the museum you are thinking of giving your collection to. If you have, say, a collection of underground comix, you will have to find that rare museum that will deal with these books and the problems they represent. There is an archive at the Parks Library on the campus of the University of Iowa in Ames, Iowa, but your comix may duplicate what is already there so you would have to correspond with the current librarian. I do know that the books are indexed and kept up at Parks and that they are available to students of the medium.

Libraries and museums continually do shows which feature what they have. These are done in the public interest and as fund raisers since many of the organizations are non-profit. A library, for example, might do a thematic show of comic books and art from World War II. The show might last two or three weeks, then be packed up and put back in storage. When the books and art are not on display, they are stored in basement rooms with the many other materials that have been donated to the organization. Some of the shows, like a recent one which featured the art and paintings of Theodore Seuss Geisel, move around from museum to museum over a period of years.

I mention all of this because most collectors like the idea of having their collections shown, but shudder at the idea that their priceless donations are going to mildew in some forgotten corner of a museum basement.

Hey, that's not the worst that can happen. Museums routinely sell donated materials to raise funds for other projects, particularly if these materials duplicate what is already on hand. If you wish to donate a collection to a museum and ensure that it will be kept and not sold you have to negotiate that kind of deal in writing. You need to contact a lawyer who specializes in this field. Otherwise, you can donate what you wish, but once the comic books, art, whatever, leave your hands, the museum is free to do whatever it wishes with it.

Write to some of the libraries and museums and see what kind of response you get. That's the best way to start. You can usually tell by the kind of shows a museum has done in the past whether or not they would treat your donation the way you would have it treated. Unless you have something pretty rare, do not be surprised if they tell you they cannot accept your donation as a permanent holding.

-Clay

PRE AND POST CONVENTION MINDSETS

There is a big difference between pre-Convention and post-Convention fandom. Today's fan has been conned in the old sense of the term and seldom says anything real about what is presented. All you get from him [hers included] is just fannish praise for schlock art and repetitious action layouts. Mediocrity chic rules. The fan asks for autographs from people he neither knows nor cares about simply because someone has told him that person is famous and, more important, the person's name scribbled in the book will increase its value. Ha!

You can only be a fan of what you know and what you know is what you see in the stores and hear about through the adzines, so the heavier the promo, the more fans. Quality has little meaning since collecting usually ends when the title ends. Could be that some guy in North Dakota is doing the greatest comic art since Winsor McCay, but no one sees it but his friends since he doesn't know how to get into the comic business. If you found this guy and published his stuff in a book and could find a way to distribute it [the hardest part of the comic business], would he be praised and collected? Hell, no. His book would sit



on the shelf with a thousand other titles and only a handful of people would ever take the trouble of opening the cover to look at the interior art. If the guy went to work for Marvel, on the other hand, he would be hyped as the latest Wally Wood, packaged and sold at the conventions, advertised widely in organized fandom, and within a very short time the title he was assigned to draw would be collected by the same brainwashed slobbering little groupies who collected the last company product. This is the sad reality of modern comicdom.

The pre-Con fan loved the comics because of the artwork in them. The Post-Con fan has to find out what comics he ought to be collecting before he spends his money and, hey, surprise, he's collecting X-Men and Spiderman just like thousands of other comicologically correct fans. Like, there may be a lot of really unique artwork in those off-brand comics, but they're not really collectable. They'll never be worth much. They don't have the company seal of approval.

Today's post-Con kid collector saves what he has been told to save and he is a conformist like his peers. He'll grow up and buy junk bonds over the phone.

When I first started attending comic conventions back in the early seventies, I would walk around the dealer's room and look at the older people sitting at tables behind their books. They had the good ones. The early Captain Marvels and Marvel Mysteries and Plastic Mans and Features and Phantom Ladies, the stuff I remembered and loved as a boy. They never had any prices on these books and I knew why. They were people like me who loved what was in those books, the characters and the stories that were associated with their childhood. Money wasn't the point. If you asked a price, they would haul out the Guide and look it up, but they didn't really want to do that, because they didn't really want to sell any of their books. They wanted to sit there and show people that they had them the way they used to invite some guys over from school and take them into their rooms and show them the same comic books.

Today I see a lot of professional dealers with the same books hanging up in plastic behind them and the price stickers

often run in the thousands and when I stand at the table I know I have nothing to say to these hucksters. They look at an old Whiz to see if it has a rusty staple or a kid's name on the inside or a little tear somewhere and all the time they are grading the book and calculating how much they can make on it. The characters and stories mean nothing to them. They look at me in terms of dollars and when they figure out that I am not likely to fork over several thousand dollars for an old copy of Action Comics [in which the art was so shitty for the first few issues that no one I knew even bought it off the stands] they ignore me and go on grading and pricing.

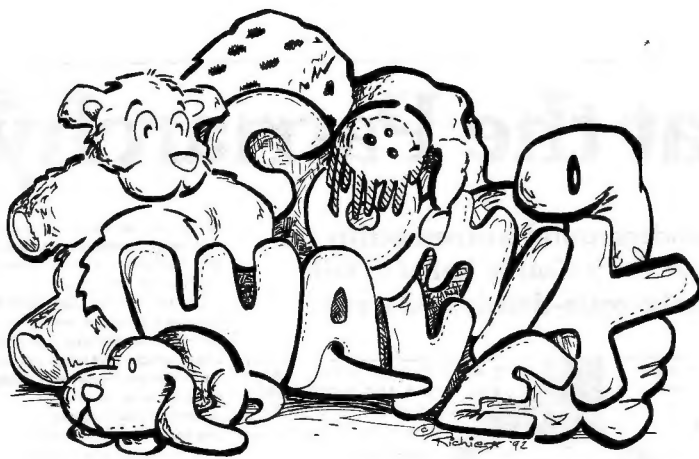
Is this progress? I don't see it that way. I saw the early cons as groups of friends getting together and having a good time with comics as the catalyst. Today's cons have become strictly business and guys run around with module phones and beepers on their belts racing from power lunch to company strategy sessions--give me a break. Even the panels have deteriorated from friendly gossip sessions to Buy Our Great Super Hero Books sessions hosted by company flacks and bullpen slaves. These PR people are usually talking among themselves and allowing the pimply groupies to eavesdrop.

It's been said that people become feminists later in life, in their thirties or when they get out in the job market. The interesting thing is that during adolescence women have more of one sort of power than they ever will again, namely sexual power. Young women are desirable. They are not yet in a position where they have to assert themselves intellectually or economically. So an eighteen-year-old woman will sometimes not see what feminism is for; often it seems to say nothing to them. At the same time, it's necessary to add that adolescence is a very difficult time for young women because they're very concerned about being likeable to teenager boys. But compared to how it's going to be later, women have more power as adolescents. That's not to say they're powerful, just more powerful.

--Robin Lakoff

There were famous alter boys. You became famous by doing something memorable on the alter--showing the enormous holes in your shoes when you knelt down--of holes in your socks; wearing cowboy boots with big heels; having an erection and telling everyone; having a laughing fit and being yelled at by the priest while he was saying mass. Franny Cresta threw up once during mass, and everyone had to sit down while a janitor mopped it up. Augie D'Agostino was famous for tripping on the alter carpet--two or three times--and actually falling on his face. My brother Louis was serving with Robert Libby the time Libby shit his pants, the most famous alter boy incident of all--how his face changed, how he panicked, how he shook a turd out of his trouserleg.

--Paul Theroux
My Secret History



FROM ZOOT TO LOOT

Across the top, parallel with the frame, he had drawn the burning city, a great bonfire of architectural styles, ranging from Egyptian to Cape Cod colonial. Through the center, winding from left to right, was a long hill street and down it, spilling into the middle foreground, came the mob carrying baseball bats and torches. For the faces of its members, he was using innumerable sketches he had made of the people who come to California to die; the cultists of all sorts, economic as well as religious, the wave, airplane, funeral and preview watchers—all those poor devils who can only be stirred by the promise of miracles and then only to violence. A super "Dr. Know-All Pierce-All" had made the necessary promise and they were marching behind his banner in a great united front of screwballs and screwboxes to purify the land. No longer bored, they sang and danced joyously in the red light of the flames. In the foreground, men and women fled wildly before the vanguard of the crusading mob.

-Tod Hackett, describing his painting, *The Burning of Los Angeles*, in Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*, 1939.

"Where did you get that suit?"
"I looted it."

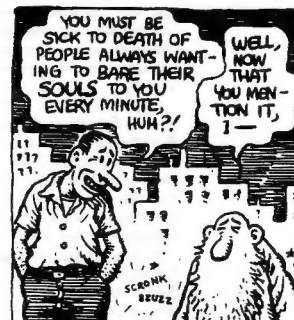
The local Berkeley stores are still on guard this week in the wake of the systematic looting that followed that amazing trial in Simi Valley. Comics and Comix has a store right in the heart of Telegraph Avenue, a street of boarded up storefronts and uptight clerks. What has happened since the People's Park demonstrations a few months back is storekeepers have started boarding up their windows in advance so that anyone attacking them will have nothing to break. Local glass companies have made a ton of money the past couple of decades. And it's not a good atmosphere. You walk down the street and look in the door and there's a lone paranoid clerk staring back at you. Who wants to sit in a boarded up coffee shop? Not me. When I go up there, I like to sit and look out the window at the people passing by. Some of the stores may decide to go the route the Bank of America took back in the sixties. They got so tired of broken windows they just bricked up the building. On the other hand one of the guys who got rich off used records is building himself a monument on the corner of Telegraph and Durant where the old UC Corner used to be. Rasputin's will be a three story building with glass windows all around. There's a guy with nerve or confidence or a signed contract he couldn't break.

Does anyone really doubt that the looting that has started to take place in the wake of social protest meetings and demonstrations is organized? Or that the items looted are chosen for both their monetary and status value? *I love the fact that the people who pay for the repetitive ads on prime time know full well that the ads condition people to need and want and buy or steal the product, yet the same power brokers will argue that repetitive violence does not condition people to be more violent in their behavior.* Can't you see these guys sitting in the board rooms in Beverly Hills and Manhattan watching the action in Los Angeles and saying, hey, look at those guys stealing OUR products. All the hype for sports products has paid off, because the kids don't even steal stuff that isn't heavily advertised. Sports gear has been adapted by many gangs these days and you have to be careful if you're just a casual fan. Around here you can get mugged for your Raiders jacket or cap. It happens on the high school playgrounds.

I like all this bullshit about race, because that's not what's going on at all. Whenever we have a "riot" around Berkeley, people come here from Martinez, Hayward, and Walnut Creek to get in on the action; i. e., to shoplift some sneakers and jeans and maybe a boom box. Most of these folks are white, and what it's about is the loot, not race. Many of the suburban kids who commute to Berkeley for these smash and grab parties have more high tech toys and clothes than they could wear in a lifetime. They do it for the excitement, the old adrenal rush. It's poor people and marginally employed people who are getting the dirty end of the stick these days and those people are of all races. The rich have a vested interest in hyping the idea that it's black vs white or black vs Asian. Divide and conquer. It works. Being white isn't going to keep you from getting your ass kicked by the police if you happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. If you think it is, talk to some of the people who were involved with People's Park this past couple of years.

What it all amounts to is that a lot of people are pissed off and tired of being insulted by establishment television. They're tired of being put down as *minority* or *underclass* or some other pejorative, tired of being shown episodes of the Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous where people live high on the booty stolen by their ancestors while the majority of the people alive in the world right now are living in shit.

Ye Olde Crumb is back with HUP 4. More fun and talk and misogyny and other good stuff. Crumb has even drawn himself as a dartboard on the back cover so the feminist with a beef can get satisfaction. \$2.95 at your local tienda.



MAYBE I'M JUST WEAK... I CAN'T TAKE IT... I WANT A BIG MOMMY TO TAKE CARE OF ME... AN OMNIPOTENT SOURCE OF SOLACE AND COMFORT.



AND THE WOMEN—OH LORD SAVE ME—THE WOMEN WERE TRULY TERRIFYING, WITH ALL THEIR "GLAMOUR", THEIR PREDATORY EYES, THEIR CRUEL, LIPSTICKED MOUTHS... EEEK!



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Poking Fun at the Patriarchy

BY HILLARY FIELDING

It's 1992, you're graduating, and it's the worst job market in years. Imagine a career based on self-expression, relating to the world what's really on your mind, and not being afraid of an authoritarian reprimand by your boss. Right now there is a group of women, all over the country, doing just that. These women are busy, leaning over their drawing boards, delivering their innermost thoughts and inventions via pen and ink.

Meet M.K. Brown, Mary Fleener, Phoebe Gloeckner, Krystine Kryttre, Carol Lay, Caryn Leschen, Diane Noomin and Carol Tyler; some of the women included in the recently published Penguin compilation, *Twisted Sisters*. A Collection of Bad Girl Art.

It was a peculiarly hot spring Saturday as I sweated my way into Comic Relief, Berkeley's foremost seller of intriguing comic books. The artists appeared wearing a variety of attire: from bright dresses and tops to faded T-shirts and jeans, and some unique colorful jewelry which included sparkling plastic beads and Tibetan smiling skulls. There was a lot of curly hair, both blonde and brown, and it made me think of what my kinky-haired friend had wondered about years ago: "Do weirdos grow that kind of hair out of their heads because of the bizarre thoughts they think?" The crowd consisted of people in shorts, black rags, faded things, and a few strange suits.

These women are in the vanguard of the women's underground comics movement. Diane Noomin, the editrix for the book project, responds to the incident in a Southern printing plant which refused to print the book for Penguin, USA.

"It's not remotely pornography, but these people are very threatened by it. And I think it's because women are doing it. Women demystifying romance and sex is scary," she said. Penguin apologized, found another printer and increased the print run.

Brash and brainy, explicit, honest, gooey, glopky and explosive, these women's comic art offers an alternative to most male-produced comics which usually present sexist images of big-breasted women, violent themes and superhero fantasy which is meant to entertain hormone-crazed teenage boys. Most women artists focus on scenes from personal experience twisted into individual styles, stretched out into fantasy and snapped back into harsh and tragic memories. Women's comic art expresses irony, pain, absurdity, drama, as well as unadulterated foolishness.

Unpretentious, warm and direct, Phoebe Gloeckner works as a medical illustrator yet hopes to become a full-time comic artist. Her mother unsuccessfully hid underground comics from the wide-eyed girl, and drawing comics was "a way to express my anti-social tendencies that was more acceptable than some of the other typical teenage things." Included in *Twisted Sisters* is a very detailed drawing of a little girl's fantasy set in the woods about a series of imaginary little men (future husbands) who physically and emotionally

A vanguard of underground women artists get together at Berkeley's Comic Relief to talk about subverting the male-dominated scene.



"Life in the Bagel Belt with Didi Glitz" by Diane Noomin.

abuse her. The girl retaliates by kicking each of them out of the fantasy. The story is about Gloeckner's mother's actual experience.

Krystine Kryttre, tall and soft-spoken, comments that producing her art has kept her "out of jail." Her dark scratchboard images fly off the page at obtuse angles in a crescendo of jagged, effusive, and joyful images — existential concerns meets horror story explications.

The women agree that drawing comics is a cathartic activity, and necessary to their survival and growth as individuals. Women in society today are so carefully inspected. The size and shape of our bodies, our features, hair and skin color; intelligence, emotions and accomplishments are scrutinized constantly by the media, penetrating everyone with a message that perpetuates an image of woman-as-object. Carol Lay's Tarzan story of a

white heiress who returns to the Western world with extensive face-shaping; orphaned and raised by an African tribe, reflects Lay's experience in L.A. "I wasn't really trying to be political, I was working out of emotion and it turned out to be a social comment. I live

dominated late 60s abstract expressionist period in America and finally decided that she wanted to draw a table or a figure and put it in her paintings. Comic art gave her the opportunity to create with figures and narrative.

"This is important," she said.

"It's not remotely pornography, but these people are very threatened by it."

—Diane Noomin

in L.A., and beauty is a premium there. If you're kind of average looking or just normal, people call you a dog or pig. In general, men are insensitive to women as just people. It's hard to get over."

Carol Tyler is an artist who went to college for art during the male-

"Not who was the first guy on the moon. This event that happened, that I witnessed, that's the most important thing to me. And it seems like nobody wants to hear that. They don't care; the guys, the world at large; I get a chance to slow it down and be as bold and

as clear as I can about that issue that just gets completely overlooked by the grinding humanity machine: I have to turn to comics."

Creatrix of "Didi Glitz," Diane Noomin's, articulate, persistent, no-bullshit-allowed alter-ego offers a feminist approach which includes the foibles and foolishness of both sexes and ends up with bold statements about modern life. Didi has evolved from the first issue of *Twisted Sisters* (now a collector's item) in 1976 along with Aline Cominsky-Crumb's dolorous, sardonic slice of life autobiographical comics. Didi has raised a daughter, dated a lot of dumb guys, hosted home sex-toy soirees, enrolled in a make-over make-believe clinic, and tried a relationship with another woman. She's fierce, frenetic, sophisticated, self-indulgent, witty, neurotic, sexy and adventurous. Noomin's character has become so life-like that, she says, "I've gotten six phone calls in the last few days from the magazine I'm working for, asking if there's a real Didi who might sue for libel."

The *Twisted Sisters*, now in their 30s and 40s, refer to their experiences in the working world. Most of them have had to — and some still do — work lousy jobs to pay the rent. M.K. Brown, one of the more fortunate artists, submitted work to *National Lampoon* in the early 1970s. They bought everything she had and have kept her on staff for the past 20 years. She fit in well with their satirical, witty approach. She has also been published in *Mother Jones*, *Atlantic*, and underground rags like *Arcade*. Brown has published children's books and produced animation bumpers for "The Tracy Ullman Show" in 1987. She claims she hasn't experienced sexism in the work place and enjoyed many opportunities as a cartoonist.

Trina Robbins, local underground cartoonist and women comics historian, has worked on such above-ground projects as *Wonder Woman*, and regrets that some publishers of underground comics have a "failure mentality" and don't print enough or pay enough.

Caryn Leschen turns to fantasy to cope with her everyday experience as a retail worker in a Noe Valley gift shop. Her spirited autobiographical stories contain dreams and sorrows of a "Jewish girl" illustrator. Mary Fleener worked as a musician in clubs and now as a cubist-inspired cartoonist who writes about the drug world as well as giant-slug-terror in the kitchen at night. In the fall, Fantagraphics will publish Carol Ann Tyler's *The Job Thing*, a collection of her comics about shitty jobs.

So, if you can't imagine spending your life in front of a test tube creating biological mutations or sitting at a computer punching numbers, you might consider this: Everyone needs a challenge and a guffaw in their lives; especially in these times of overwhelming technology and social deterioration. It doesn't look easy, but the personal satisfaction just may be worth it.

Don't miss the last two days of The Cartoon Art Museum's exhibit: "Broad Humor: The Art of Women Cartoonists Past, Present and Future." It's located at 665 3rd Street in San Francisco. Call (415) 546-9481.



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 123

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KISS COMIX 6 features Dave Stevens drawing of Betty Page on the cover and asks Who Killed Betty Page? I didn't know anybody did. \$10 from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain.

EL VIBORA 147 is \$10 from the same address. Adults only for all underground comix. Send an age statement with first order.

Will Weirdom never cease? I collect comics with weird covers and ideas and this month's classic pairs up **BIG BIRD VERSUS ARNOLD SCHWARZENHEIMER**. Violent muppets? Oy! The address is 818 Fort Salonga Road, Suite 118, Northport, New York 11768. Tom Arvis drew it. Write and ask for their catalog.

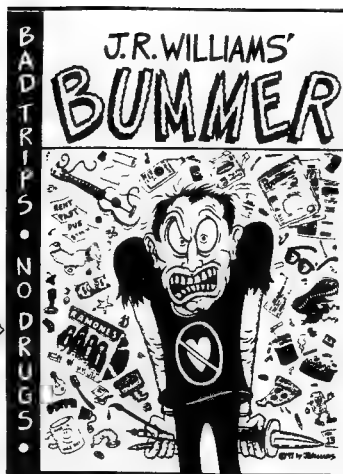
Eric Vincent illustrated a story called "The Spy," in Dark Horse's **ANIMAL CONFIDENTIAL**. I liked Nina Paley's "I was a teenaged hairball." Dark Horse will bring out a book by Paley this Fall.

BABY SUE rants on in V. 3, issue 3. \$2 from POB 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111.

BAY CON '92 is set for May 22-25, 1992, at the Red Lion Inn in San Jose, California. Information from POB 10367, San Jose, CA 95157.

CEREBUS 157 features a nice drawing of a woman in bed with an aardvark. Check it out at your local comic book store.

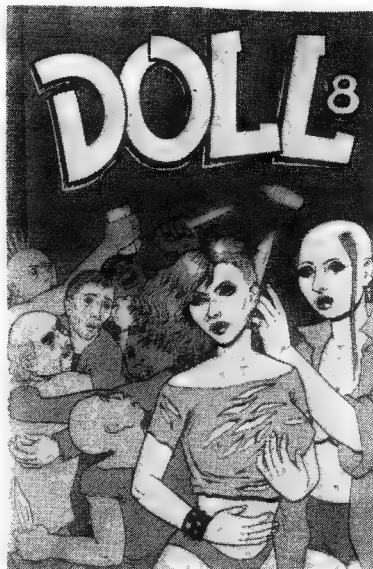
Mr. Poetry's Poetry Reading Tips is the latest by John Dooley and Michael Stengl. \$1 pp. from Michael Stengl, POB 568, Trinidad, CA 95570. It made me laugh, mainly because I was into the poetry trip back in my college teaching days. Yes, it's true. I read poems in local coffee shops, some of them my own compositions. It all had to do with the fact that I wound up in the Bay Area at the tail end of the Beat poetry trip and heard people like Allen Ginsberg reading on street corners out in North Beach.



If you've missed seeing Steve Lafler's **DOGBOY**, ease up. He makes a new appearance in **BUZZARD 5**. \$3.50 from Cat-Head Comics, POB 576, Hudson, MA 01749. Coming up from the same company is J. R. Williams' **BUMMER**. Most back issues are still available so ask for a list!

Mike Grell is illustrating a James Bond story, *Permission to Die*, for Eclipse. I mention this because I got a freebie at Wonder Con. and because I have all the Bond videos.

Sorry, but I just don't believe Brooke Shields as **BRENDA STARR**. *Hated it*, as the Men on Film from *Living Color* would say.



DOLL WARS

DOLL isn't worn out yet. How could she be? A woman with renewable body parts? #8 will be out from Rip Off Press this summer. I think it would be nice to see a team-up of Doll and Data, the android from **STAR TREK**. That's always been a problem in underground comix. No team-ups. Imagine. Wonder Wart-hog meets Angelfood McSpade. Cherry Poptart meets Harold Hedd. Fat Freddy's Cat and Waldo and Pat the Cat could all get together for a big Yowl-in on Sammy Smoot's windowsill.

Would you believe **MS. PMS**? With a lead story entitled "Death of the Afterbirth"? Yep, all true. It was written and drawn by Chris Swafford of Joplin, MO.

TARZAN, SCHMARZAN, AND MELVIN...

The family of Edgar Rice Burroughs is bugged at **VOGUE** this month because they have allegedly tarnished the clean, wholesome image of the ape man, Tarzan. Why, **VOGUE** implies via a photo spread that Tarzan and Jane might have done more in the tree house than play with Boy and Cheeta and the protectors of Tarzan's chastity have filed suit in Manhattan Federal Court.

Way back in 1912 when Burroughs first published a story about Tarzan in *All-Story Magazine*, it was closely compared to the story of Mowgli in Rudyard Kipling's **JUNGLE BOOK** and yep, Kipling said it was obviously a swipe of his character. But Burroughs' version of the character was successful in pulp, strip, and comic book, which meant numerous imitations like Ka-anga who had the lead story in Fiction House's **JUNGLE COMICS**. And if there were white kings of the African jungle, there had to be queens, right? Will Eisner thought so and invented Sheena. But the jungle popcult of the thirties was less influenced by Burroughs and the Hogarth Tarzan strip running in the Sunday funnies than by the big game hunting fad which intrigued Ernest Hemingway to go on safari and write the **GREEN HILLS OF AFRICA** [1934]. The needs of travelling circuses and city zoos sent Clyde Beatty and Frank Buck into the jungles and their exploits were widely reported in news stories and movietone newsreels. Beatty and Buck came and went, but Tarzan had a long career in movies and comic strips. His absurd brand of white supremacy was a fantasy panacea [a fantacea?] for the hundreds of thousands of unemployed white men who stood in the bread lines during the Depression that began when the market crashed in October of 1929.

A little strange to see the Burroughs family worried about a **VOGUE** pictorial. Can it be they missed John Derek's version of **TARZAN** with Bo as Jane? Even stranger to look at a Hogarth page from a 1939 Sunday funnies page Clark Dissmeyer sent me and see one lone white man, namely Tarzan, beating up half a dozen black men, referred to as "savages."

I see Wonder Woman is back. Walking around in the snow in her star-spangled underwear. You're safe, guys, because it's being written by a man again. Well, get this, *when you present a woman as a heroine, yet she hasn't got sense enough to dress for the weather, you're automatically saying she's a stupid bimbo*. Superman, Batman, and the rest of the colored underwear crew always dress for the weather. Look at **SILVER SABLE**. Marvel solved the problem with her the way they did with **BLACK WIDOW** back in the seventies. **SABLE** wears a silver colored body suit which is skin tight so she's naked without being naked. Clever, huh? I like the panel where **SABLE** kicks this guy in the balls. "I had assumed your brain was in your skull. My mistake," she says. Tsk! Tsk! Wonder Woman would never do a thing like that. DC heroines are couther than Marvel.

Dear Clay,

I hope you don't take offense at this, but it seems to me that in the past year your COMIX WAVE articles are taking an increasingly negative or defeatist view of the world. There are lots of things to rail about, but there are also lots of things to be enthusiastic about. I think I picked up on COMIX WORLD around the 30th issue or so. It excited me because you were writing about creative people trying to do something with their skills and energy. It made me feel there was a community of people who might succeed in making this world a more fun and fair place.

Do you think there has been a shift in your writings? It is possible that I am just injecting something that really stems from me.

What artists and people are doing positive things that you'd like to see more people aware of? I'm interested.

-Jay Kennedy

Dear Jay,

I think this is a valid reaction, perhaps more to what is going on in 1992 than to my CW ravings. In the early seventies, CW reflected what was going on at that time, i. e., a viable underground network of cartoonists in synch with an overall movement I felt was positive in nature. The Movement has continued in varied forms with younger people moving in and pushing the older generation out. Ron Cobb, who did a number of superb political cartoons for the Los Angeles FREE PRESS, is now animating aliens and monsters for the movie industry. Robert Crumb, whose "Whiteman" was a socio-psychological breakthrough in the late sixties, is now hanging around in Paris and being the "living legend" at European comic art shows. While the sexual content of the early underground comix was liberating to a generation coming out of the repressive era of McCarthy and his fascist Unamerican Activities Committee and the Wertham-stimulated Comics Code Authority of 1954, the sexual content of many current titles by Eros, Last Gasp, and Rip Off Press is pure entertainment and titillation sans social or political meaning.

In my newsletter I reacted to and commented upon what was happening at the time. I will never deny that I get nostalgic for the euphoric sixties when all the doors were open and something or someone new came in every day. The nineties are a whole different world. When I walk through the comic store, what do I see along the shelves? Terminators, Aliens, Punishers, murderous clowns, serial killers, war, plague, pestilence, anger, and very, very little that I consider positive. The art in many of these comic books is very good, but I find the spirit in which the repetitive stories are produced to be mean and warped. Some of the pages may be aesthetically commanding, but I find the entire genre an intellectual vacuum and the aura projected decisively negative. How could this not be

DAVE MERAZ [1966-1992]

SICK TALES artist Dave Meraz drowned in Santa Cruz on March 10. Rip Off Press has cancelled his comic book. Born July 17, 1966, Dave was 25.

DEAR CLAY...



reflected in my current articles? I might mention Terry Laban's UNSUPERVISED EXISTENCE series here. I found all of these stores filled with humor and insight and I felt the author had a positive humanitarian point of view, one which I share. I enjoy Laban's political panels in IN THESE TIMES and I think he and M. K. Wuerker, whose panels appear often in Z are centered in the way Ron Cobb was circa 1967.

I have always admired the work of Guy Colwell, a major underground cartoonist, seldom mentioned outside my own newsletter. His INNER CITY ROMANCE series in the early seventies showed a lot of insight into the social and political thought of the time. His DOLL trilogy was a marvelous journey into male-female relationships, but I felt that continuing the title was pornography for its own sake.

I would consider the work of both Laban and Colwell negative and defeatist. A lot of depressing stuff there. I think a positive social commentary can always be interpreted as negative and defeatist. I might cite T. S. Eliot's THE WASTE LAND, James Joyce's ULYSSES, Shakespeare's HAMLET, usw.

Art is so complex. In 1973, it was still idealism. I don't remember any underground cartoonist ever saying he was in it for the money, but I remember all the stuff I never printed and most of it was about money. Admiration was expressed about those who were actually making a living with comic art. My early newsletters are mostly hype with very little insight or philosophy. Since those days, I have interviewed nearly every innovator in comics and animation and read hundreds of books about the artists and the industry. I look at the comic books a lot more critically today than I did then and I am more prone to express my true feelings now than I was when I was trying to maintain friendly relationships with all of the people in the business. It was not simple. I was an underground press reporter who worked by the seat of his pants. I would interview a cartoonist one day and he would tell me his publisher was every kind of an asshole and a rip-off. The next day I would be talking to the publisher and he would be complaining about this or that artist being too drunk or stoned to get his art in so the book was being held up. I would talk to one artist and he would say he was never going to

ask this or that artist for a story again because the asshole was holding up the book. I would hear all about the personal lives of the artists and publishers, what drugs they were using, who was fucking who, who was a thief and couldn't be trusted, blah! blah! blah! I never printed any of that stuff in my newsletter, but I was called a gossip anyway.

Most of the people I knew and wrote about are dead, Jay. The others have moved away and aged just like you and me. The Newave network I inspired through CW in early eighties was very successful as you know. Out of it came Kevin Eastman, Valentino, John Howard, Bob Vojtko who is now a successful magazine and tabloid panel cartoonist. The product of that period was never an economic success, though it might have been had I been willing to move in the direction taken by Fantagraphics. I didn't. I am still a hobbyist, not a businessman. A number of the comic books around today were offered to me first, but I always routed them to one or another of the underground companies.

I guess I don't know what you would consider positive, Jay. Underground comix were positive in the sense that they broke the stranglehold of an Eastern monopoly and ultimately returned control of the form to the creator. But the content was seldom positive. Crumb's sadistic misogyny was humorous and cathartic on first reading, but upon reflection who can fail to feel a bit of sympathy for a man in his late forties who continues to draw pictures of a vicious little man torturing oversized pubescent girls? The revolutionary smash the state rhetoric of the time merely seems naive in the shadow of the Reagan-Bush oligarchy.

I will say this—I am more pleased with newsletter these days than I have been in a long while, because I feel it is a closer reflection of what is really going on around me than it was. I was in danger of becoming nothing but a hype sheet for awhile and that bothered me. As for the tone and the attitude, well, it's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease. There are a lot of nice things going on in comics. I like them. Nice to see the reprints of L'il Abner and the Messmer Felix the Cat. But I'm not stimulated to write about the comics that are going well.

I got a lot of positive feedback about that acid article in my last issue. I don't have anything against acid per se, but I do know that for every intellectual who takes it in order to raise his consciousness, there are a hundred brainless clods who take it for the high and expect the rest of us to clean up after and take care of them. 'Twas ever thus in Haight-Ashbury and LSD's effect upon the uninformed brain is no different in 1992.

-Clay

BENNY HILL [1925-1992]

Benny Hill died in London in April of a heart attack at 67. Benny was born January 21, 1925. His parents were circus performers. His show was popular in England until it went off the air in 1989. It is still showing in re-runs on the Fox Network in the U.S. His routines are available on video. I loved Benny and his gang.



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 124

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EL VIBORA 149 is \$10 from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. **KISS COMIX 8** is \$10. Spain's ultimate sex comic. Adults only.

New on the zine scene is Mike DeAngelo with **PRIMAL SCREAM 1**, a print-out zine re horror and schlock movies. A lot of laughs in the first one. Trade Mike yours for his. 2828 James Street, #303, Syracuse, NY 13206-2256.

Yes, there is an **Abbott and Costello Fan Club**. It's \$8 to join and you get lots of data about the comedians and their career. POB 2084, Toluca Lake, CA 91610-0084.

HUMOR LIVES IN CHICAGO

Chicago has a new monthly humor magazine, **BONUS**. The first issue has a cover by Robert Crumb and the first part of the most recent interview with the now-expatriate cartoonist. POB 3433, Merchandise Mart Station, Chicago, IL 60654. Send a couple of bucks for postage and handling. Carole Sobocinski is the editor. #2 has a cover by Skip Williamson and the first interview he's done in quite awhile. Skip drew Snappy Sammy Smoot in the halcyon days of underground comix and worked for Playboy for several years.

The eighth volume of **THE COMPLETE CRUMB** came out late in June and features Fritz the Cat on the cover.

Richie Prosch has **FARMBOY FUNNIES 2**. 50¢ Stamp. 305 Pinehaven, Laurens, SC 29360.

THE SUBLIMINAL ZONE CHRONICLES COMIX is \$2 or trade from Arte Ala Carte, POB 105, Canton, CT 06019 USA.

THE MARCH OF CRIME

The weed of crime bears bitter fruit.
The Shadow

If Dostoyevsky were writing today, he wouldn't call it **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**. He'd call it **CRIME AND ENTERTAINMENT**. Just think of all the sociological and psychological theses in progress dealing with the relationship between crime and entertainment, stuff like the Serial Killer Assassin as Media Popstar and From Lizzie to Jeffie. Ann Rule, who wrote Ted Bundy's life story, went on to make a career out of true crime books. These days Crime is seen by many of the amoral young as a legitimate ladder to success. I just read **THE MORMON MURDERS**, the tale of a forger and bomber named Mark Hoffman. This guy committed so many crimes and rip-offs, it wasn't funny, and he only got 15 years. Ah, well, Richard Nixon has done no time, and the Bush family is still on the loose, but relax, that mad murdering hippie, Charley Manson, is still in the slammer.

Would you believe Ruth Slawson at NBC has had *dozens* of pitches for television movies about the Jeffrey Daumer multiple murder case in Milwaukee? No deal, she said. Too weird and repulsive for television. "The best case," she said, "involves everyday people, somebody like your next-door neighbor doing something unexpected." Hell, my next door neighbors would rent a video about Daumer and sit there eating pizza as he offed one teenaged boy after another. Wasn't Jeff just trying to fulfill the Friday the 13th/Nightmare on Elm Street/Hallowe'en teen slasher prophecy?

These are weird times we live in, folks. I was in Lincoln, Nebraska, recently and my sister told me the penitentiary there is filled with young people who did nothing more serious than smoke a little marijuana. The valium addicts who work the banks and loan companies commit megacrimes and get a few months in country club jails. Liquor and nicotine ads are aimed at young kids and when the weak ones take the bait they get busted and do time. What this does is maintain a large pool of unemployable ex-convicts who must commit more crimes or subsist on welfare.

When I was a boy trying to get my first job, I was always asked if I had had any experience. Well, of course, I didn't. Where would I have gotten it? I was also asked if I had ever been arrested. I hadn't, but if I had I doubt that I would have gotten the shitwork jobs I did get. At that time, I could have lied easily enough because potential employers had no way to check my answers out, but today everything you have done is linked to your social security and driver's license numbers and that information might as well be public, because it is readily available to any company for a nominal fee. Today's professional data banks keep track of just about everything you do. If you have a single credit card, your privacy is nil. Everything you buy is recorded. Every video you rent is recorded. *Surprise, a lot of video stores keep a file of everything you rent.* They do this because it helps them to know what to order and what isn't being rented, but this file can work against you. If the police or the FBI or any other official agency wants to see it, they can.

With the huge surplus of local and immigrant labor available today, companies do not have to hire anyone with any kind of criminal record. An arrest without conviction is not a criminal record and innocent people are mistakenly arrested every day of the year in an overly zealous police-dominated country, but if you are an employer with access to thousands of able bodies, why take a chance on someone who has been picked up for shoplifting, vandalism, or smoking a joint? A neighbor of mine told me he was stopped for a traffic violation and found that the police still had a charge against him in the computer that dated from 1969! He had a beef with the police during a protest march and had been told that it had been erased when the charge was dismissed by a judge. Not so. In our weird electronically watched society, that candy bar you lifted at 7-11 when you were a kid can come back to cost you a job twenty years later.

We have a real paradox in America in 1992, because crime is glorified via entertainment--several dozen crimes against people and property are committed in the first few minutes of **BATMAN RETURNS!**--and people wonder why some of their children imitate what they see. We see arguments about the effects of cinematic violence on real violence on one or another of the talk shows nearly every week. Well, monkey see, monkey do. *If corporations are willing to spend billions on prime time advertising to back up their belief that you can brainwash people to buy a product with constant repetition [and sales figures show they are right], then only a fool can say that the glorification of violence and vandalism promulgated through films like BATMAN RETURNS, LETHAL WEAPON, ROBOCOP, DARKMAN, TERMINATOR, et. al., fails to develop in the young mind a propensity toward violent and anti-social behavior.* This is not true of all young people, nor is it true of all the young people who watch these paeans to gore and anarchy, but it is true for a growing block of people who, understandably, find it difficult to distinguish between the illusions on the screen and the reality on the street.

Cute, huh? I personally found **BATMAN RETURNS** to be a piece of humorless, disgusting, amoral, insensitive, dehumanized, negative rot, and what surprises me is that McDonald's would want to tarnish their peachy keen family image by associating their golden buns with it. That film is so far from Bob Kane's original conception of Batman that I am surprised he would put his name on it.

This has been another infotaining advertorial brought to you by Comix Suave.

In case you wondered why the interest was so low on your checking account

The nation's commercial banks earned a record 7.6 billion in the first three months of this year, up 36 percent from a year ago, despite continued large losses on loans particularly for commercial real estate, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Reported.

John Berry
The Washington Post
June 11, 1992



Dear Uncle Clay--

I've been drawing a lot of strips and cartoons, but I don't know what to do with them or where to send them. How do you get into this cartooning business anyway?

Jim Winkler

Dear Jim--

How would I know? I never got into it. Seriously, there are as many ways of getting into comics as there are most businesses, but it may be trickier than going in the door of Marvel and filling out the application form. All I can tell you are some of the things cartoonists do. I'm assuming you know the craft which means what kind of ink and paper to use, what size to draw, how to use zipatone and other technical stuff you get from a good art class. If not, Read no further.

If you have material ready to show someone, you have to decide who you want to show it to and how you are going to get your art to that person. The mail is the worst method, but if you choose it, there are some strict rules. Never send your original art anywhere. Always get good stats and submit the stats. Don't expect anything to be returned unless you have included the return postage, because most companies are not going to pay your bills. You can include a cover letter, but make it short, because whoever gets your stuff is going to look at the art, not your letter.

The best method for getting considered is to attend one of the major comic conventions during the season. Normally, cons take place from early Spring to late summer. The Comic Buyer's Guide [CBG] routinely lists all of them as well as display ads for them. So does The Comics Journal [TCJ]. If your goal is to show your art to some of the companies, you want to get a nice folio and choose your best work. I would be sure to cover the work, because it will be handled and there are people at cons who are as sloppy as the kids at home where spilling things are concerned. It's not necessary to carry your originals around. In fact, it is better to have sharp stats that will fit a nice 11x14 or 16x20 portfolio. If you use the convention to your advantage, you will make it a point to attend the panel discussions and lectures given by the people and companies you want to contact,

preferably before you approach them with your work. You will not be the only person there with art to show, so the more you know about the person you have decided to approach the better your meeting will go. It might be fun to show your art to someone for a bit of ego boo, but if that person is not the one at the company you are wasting valuable time.

Skill, talent, and expertise are taken for granted. As a newcomer, you are competing for space against people who have been in the business for many years. You might be the next Wally Wood, but that doesn't mean you'll be hired on the spot and given your own title to work on.

At a con, you may think of yourself as an artist, but that is not your function. Not if you want in. If you are after a job in the industry, you have to sell at a con. The buyers will be looking at you and your art as potential product. That's not going to be the best experience for you, but you have to endure it or you might as well stay home and watch the incoming mail. The artists working for the major companies today are expected to do a lot of promotional work for their companies. The people you see behind the tables at Marvel and DC and Dark Horse and Eternity are there to sell the company product and to mine new talent to enhance future sales. Do not ever think it is just a matter of drawing, not in the 1990s. A top artist or writer at Marvel is expected to travel to the major cons, sit on the panels, lecture, teach short seminars, sign autographs, and hype the company titles ad infinitum. Those who really work the cons put in a 14-18 hour day.

Be prepared to wait a lot. The last time I saw Kevin Eastman, the head of Mirage, he had forty appointments scheduled for the afternoon. I'm sure most of these wasted his time with Ninja turtle imitations or Ninja Jackrabbits or Ninja Sandworms, but he may have discovered a good inker or letterer among the lot.

If you approach a company table, the first thing to find out is who is looking at art. At Wonder Con in 1991, Bob Foster was looking at art and commenting on it for the Disney Company.

How you approach someone is very important at a con. When you see someone at a company table, that person is working and will be responsive to your questions, but when you see the same person on the floor or near the hot dog stand, that's break time and it is a big mistake to intercept the person and try to do business at that time. Business is done at the tables in the trade room or the dealer's room. Appointments may be made for private discussions in hotel rooms or in outside restaurants, but the artists and admin people who attend the cons resent people who intrude on their private time.

It is not a good idea to try to talk to someone immediately before or after a panel discussion. The discussion is set for a specific time period which includes a certain amount of give and take with the audience, but when the panel is over the people involved have to vacate the area so the next panel can start. If you are trying to talk to one of the panelists or show some artwork, you are showing a lack of knowledge of how things work at a con and making yourself look bad. All major cons set up specific times and places for photo

and autograph sessions and if you violate the routine you will be considered an asshole. If you want to work for Marvel, go to the Marvel panels and ask your questions. Make notes or tape what is said so you can listen to it later.

Conventions have evolved over the past couple of decades and they have improved a lot along the way. Most are set up now to make things faster and more efficient, particularly for young artists trying to make contact with the companies. Study the schedule and follow the routine and make a friendly, not a hostile, impression. If you have a specific company in mind, there is nothing wrong with writing a letter to someone there ahead of time. You can send a sample of your work and say you look forward to seeing them at the upcoming convention.

Finally, if you live in an area where there is a comic book company, go there and talk to anyone who will talk to you and look at your work. Not all companies are in New York the way they were back in the early sixties. Since the days of underground comix, there are small companies all over California and the Pacific Northwest. Call them up. Stop by with your folio. Listen to what they say. Don't be afraid to ask if they know of anyone who might like to see what you are doing. The people in the comic book business know each other. Many have been at conventions together for twenty years or more and they have no problem with referring artists back and forth. Addresses of the various comic book companies are listed in their publications and most of them advertise routinely in CBG and TCJ as well as many other fanzines.

While few conventions focus on strip and panel art, some of these folks are always present at the major cons in places like Chicago, Orlando, and San Diego. Strip syndication is probably the toughest nut to crack. Jay Kennedy of King Features told me last year that they started six new strips out of several thousand submitted. A lot of people did a lot of work with no reward, because to enter that derby you have to submit six weeks of dailies and Sundays.

Panels do sell through the mail, but the pay is rock bottom. Harvey Kurtzman told me a couple of years back in San Deigo that the way he dealt with panel submissions as a cartoon editor for Vanity Fair was to look at a dozen pencils and if he liked one he would mark it for completion and ask to see it again. He said cartoon editors like to look at about a dozen pencil roughs on 8 1/2x 11 white paper and artists should always be aware that the captions may be changed. For a long time the cartoon editor at Playboy, Michelle Urry, simply farmed out old captions to specific cartoonists.

Panel ideas, like story or article ideas sent to magazines through the mail, may be xeroxed and filed to find their way into someone else's hands later. Nothing you can do about that. Ideas cannot be copyrighted, so if you should see some panel idea you submitted appear under someone else's ink somewhere, just chalk it up as a learning experience.

Good luck!
-Clay Heards
6/12

CLAY GEERDES' Comix Wave



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 125

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The American public believed in the due process of law though they were the most criminal populace in the world.

Mario Puzo
The Fourth K, 1990

Dear Clay,

I see the Martin Goodman just died. The obit I read said he created Captain America. Oh, yeah?

-Wally Davis.

Dear Wally,

Oh, man, these obituaries are something else, aren't they? Jack Kirby came up with Captain America in 1941 about the time William Marston was dreaming up Wonder Woman to try to get little girls into reading comic books. I just read two glowing obits on Bill Gaines and both of them gave him credit for MAD. No mention of Harvey Kurtzman, Will Elder, or any of the guys who actually did the magazine. Whaddaya gonna do? When they did a movie about Archie a year or so ago, John Goldwater took creative credit on the film. They'll probably stick that in his obit. It was Bob Montana who created Archie back in 1945. Hey, this is capitalism we're talking about here. The people who own things in this country always try to take credit away from the slaves who create and do the work.

-Clay

Now I know. Pat Brady, who does the beautiful art for the strip *ROSE IS ROSE*, is a man. He did the cover for the Winter, 1992 issue of *RADIANCE: The Magazine for Large Women*. Turns out Brady is 43. He's from Louisville, KY, and now lives in a little town in Illinois. He says, "the path to syndication is not complicated. I drew two weeks worth of comic strips, made photocopies of them, and sent a set to each of the major newspaper feature syndicates." All turned him down but United Media; they took the strip and it appeared for the first time April 15, 1984, in about 60 papers.

Since 1985, Joe Bob Briggs has been telling it like it is or was in *WE ARE THE WEIRD*. This zine deals in horror movies and the horror of popcult. In the latest, Joe Bob wonders why most talk shows have become all hype and no real talk. *WATW* is getting longer and heading toward magazinedom, so Uncle Clay says check out a free sample. POB 2022, Dallas TX 75225.

Jim Ryan's *ANARCHAOS*, a hand made book, is \$12.50 pp. "Some reprints, some new, some jams with others, all sorts of mixed media," says Jim. I'd say the ug/newave collector would be wise to get one of these.

CITY LIMITS GAZETTE is \$15 a year now. Steve Willis. POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390. The current issue contains an interview with the founder of CLG, Bruce Chrislip.

THE MANGROVE NEWS publishes funny stuff out of Summerland Key, Florida [POB 305, 33042]. Cartoons, strips, panels, satire, and other goodies. Get in touch. Wheel and deal.

SLINGSHOT is the nineties version of the old Berkeley *BARB*. This is the radical paper of 1992, written mostly by activist students who are into things like animal activism, pro-choice, gay rights. It's published out of Eshleman Hall at UC Berkeley [room 700, 94720] in case you want to get in touch. A dollar might get you a sample copy, but don't quote me.

Howard Kurtz did an article about Garry Trudeau in the Washington *POST* in late May, 1992. "Is Trudeau getting away with Murder?" I like this quotation from Trudeau: "Political cartoons are a kind of reality cocktail--part fact, part fiction, part serious and part frivolous--and they don't always go down smoothly."

I recommend *LOOKOUT* #37, an opinionzine by Lawrence Livermore whose writing I know from Bruce Anderson's *ANDERSON VALLEY ADVERTISER*. \$2, POB 11374, Berkeley, CA 94701.

Lynda Seaver did an article on black superheroes in the Oakland *TRIBUNE*, June 4, 1992, P. B-1. "The Cipher, the Savior, B. B. & The Diva." Marvel has revived *Luke Cage* and comics about black superheroes are doing well in the Bay Area right now. *Brotherman* and *Zulu Nation* are selling well. A note on those doing comicological research. Newspapers are usually stored on microfilm and kept at main libraries where they may or may not be available to you through interlibrary loan. When they are

not, the library will usually sell you a copy of the article for a small amount of money, but you have to have the specific reference. For this reason I am including that type of information in my newsletter. You need the date, page, and title. C.G.

CEREBUS 158 contains the 8th part of Dave Sim's *MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS* story.

EL VIBORA 148 is \$10 from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona Spain. This beautifully produced mag keeps up with the European comics scene of which Gilbert Shelton and Robert Crumb are now a part. *KISS COMIX* 7, the ultimate sex comic is \$10 from the same address. Always include an age statement with your first order for anything having to do with sex. you can have all the violence and gore you want at the age of three, but in puritan America sex continues to sell best when forbidden.

William M. Gaines
1922-1992

Bill Gaines died June 3 at 70. I met the creator of EC back in the early seventies when he was touring to promote a book about himself. Bob Beerbohm and I went up to his room at the Clift Hotel in San Francisco for a chat. Without Bill, we might never have had any adult comix. He didn't create or draw a lot of the stuff he published at EC, but he kept the company together and it was one of the strongest influences on underground comix. Some obits give him sole credit for *MAD*, well, it was Harvey Kurtzman who created *MAD* and we all know that, but it was Gaines who kept it going. The big Question is who inherited that huge collection of zeppelins Bill had hanging around his office?

A fourth-grader at Parker School in Billerica, Mass., wrote a nice newspaper article describing 15 Ways to Kill Your Sister. Some of the possibles included hiding a cobra under her pillow, squishing her head with a clamp, or tying her to the front bumper of a car with no brakes. Gladys Cerrato, who supervised the student paper, thought it was a creative thing, but she was reprimanded by the powers-that-be and school officials have reassured anguished parents [and sisters, we hope] that future issues will contain articles that are appropriate.

Don't you love it? I went to see *Batman Returns* the day it opened. Me and about a thousand 8-11-year-olds in bat hats and t-shirts. This mean-spirited movie could be titled 150 ways to kill and main your sister. Didn't you love the shot of that cat chewing on Michele Pfeiffer's fingers? But Warner-Time-DC know the kid mind. This *Batman* outgrossed that last one.

The people of America did not want to be equal, they wanted to be rich. Nearly all the states had their own lottery with prizes running high up into the millions. More people brought lottery tickets than voted in the national elections.

Mario Puzo
The Fourth K, 1990

Dear Clay--

What's the best history of comics and where can I find it?

-W. Simms

Dear WS,

There is no best history of anything. It all depends on who you ask. There are a number of books about the comics, comic books, comic and cartoon characters, and there is a great deal of overlap in all of them. All have serious problems and pass them along to the researcher. Those who have written about comics include insiders and outsiders but few would be considered intellectuals or scholars. It's easy to tell. Take a look at any history and see if there is a bibliography. Does the writer name his sources so you can follow up on a theme or artist that interests you? If he doesn't name his sources, why not? How do you know he isn't making it all up as he goes along, comics being the fantasy medium they are? When Maurice Horn was putting together his *Encyclopedia of the Comics* and it's grandiose companion *The Encyclopedia of Cartoons*, he solicited articles on various subjects and trends from different people and he printed what he got back. The problem was many of these people wrote their pieces off the top of their head and didn't check any of their facts and dates. And Horn didn't check their data. This lead to a game which was carried on by many of us for years, counting the errors in the Horn books. Don Thompson used to keep the latest count in his editorials in *The Buyer's Guide*.

When I got interested in comics again circa 1967, there were only a few reference books and they were out of print. Becker's *Comic Art in America*, Coulton Waugh's *The Comics*, and a collection of essays entitled *All In Color For A Dime* were it. A few years later, Steranko's *History of The Comics* came out and I think it is the best coverage to date of the mainstream superhero comics though it has no bibliography and is prone to errors which one can only attribute to the faulty memories of the artists and writers themselves. Today there are hundreds of books about the comics, many of them quite good. Problem is, they are seldom bought by libraries and they only remain in the comic book stores for a short while.

Libraries still suffer from the Oz syndrome. When Frank Baum was writing the Oz books in the early 1900s, they were

all best sellers, but librarians rejected them along with the rest of the boys and girls series books. The argument had to do partly with snobbism and partly with shelf space. Buy one and the kids would keep asking for the next and the next and you could have an entire wing of the library filled with nothing but books about Dorothy and the Rover Boys and Aunt Jane's Nieces. Books about comics were not a problem until recently, because there were only a couple and they were bought by some librarians, and subsequently stolen. I talked to a librarian in Berkeley and she told me it was difficult to deal with any book that attained collector value. Oz books are expensive and you can't put a book that a collector will pay a hundred dollars for on the shelf in the Children's Section of a library. It will either become damaged or stolen post haste. She showed me a copy of Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* with pages torn out of it. The library copy of Becker's *Comic Art In America* also had missing pages. A mint copy of the Wertham first edition with the bibliography goes for as much as \$200 these days. So much for the library.

If you become a serious student of comic art, you will have to assemble your own library, then you will have to realize that *you can't take any of the books for granted. You have to check everything for accuracy.* When I started doing comic articles in the late sixties, I talked to primary sources and accepted what they said as true. It seldom was. I learned I could count on a few people to have accurate information, but I had to double check others. There were a number of underground comic publishers and artists around in 1969, but most of them worked on their own and they had not met each other. I introduced a lot of these people to one another and got them together, with a certain amount of resistance, for the first Underground Comix Convention [April 20-22, 1973]. There were and are many different trends in comic art and these artists were not at all of like mind. I got to know all of them peripherally and a number well enough to maintain my historical interest in the subject. I started my newsletter *COMIX WORLD* in October of 1973 and as publishers gave me review copies of their comix I wrote about them and passed along information about the artists.

Go to a comic store. There is where you will find both in and out of print books about comics. Look them over and get one. Waugh's *The Comics* has been reprinted and is a good introduction to the medium. He worked at King Features Syndicate for many years and knew most of the people he wrote about. For statistics and publication data on the early comic books, see library copies of *Motion Picture Herald* and *Advertising Age*, both of which used to give monthly and annual sales figures.

There is a lot of research left to do in the field of comic art. More and more educated people have come into the business in the past decade than ever before and the image of comics is changing rapidly. I suspect we will see the medium leave the nether world of popular culture and attain the respectability it deserves in the 1990s. Personally, I get a little bored with people who think comics are nostalgia. Hey, get real. It's a huge business

with thousands of people involved from creation to consumption, and there are just as many readers around who would be interested in reading biographies of people like Jerome Siegal and C. C. Beck as they would books about actors.

Getting publishers to realize this is something else again.

--Uncle Clay

Dear Uncle Clay--

Why do people persist in calling comic magazines comic books?

--Jerry Dmitrios

Dear Jerry--

Just another one of those little conventions we are stuck with, pal. Back in the early days, newspapers were folded but not stapled or perfect bound so it is likely when Max Gaines put together his first collection of the newspaper comics and had it folded and stapled by a bindery it became a comic book in the minds and jargon of the people who did the work. By the fifties, it was a matter of measured format, because Harvey Kurtzman was able to move *MAD* from comic book to magazine simply by changing the size and eliminating the interior color. Kurtzman did this to evade the Comics Code of 1954, but the move did more than this because it put *MAD* among the magazines on sale and away from the comic book rack.

Magazine comes from the French word for department store [magazin] and I'm not sure it is all that appropriate in reference to comics. A copy of *Superman* filled with stories about the title character certainly doesn't qualify, but some of the anthology titles might be diverse enough.

In the forties, comic books were trash to many parents [mine, for sure] while magazines were quasi-respectable. *Book* has taken on many different meanings in our time. You bet on a race, you place bets with a *bookie* who is a guy who *makes book*. You go on vacation, you *book* a room. If none are available, the place is *all booked up*. You play a sax, you *book* a gig with a club. You get into it with the police and you get *booked*. A book is no longer just a book but a good read. The *Good Book* is *The Bible* to many people, while a *dirty book* is one that has sex in it. Today's comic book may be a lot of different sizes and shapes and page lengths from the 3x4" minicomic to the 8 1/2 x 11" magazine format.

When I was a boy, I would say, "Mom, can I get a comic?" Today, a comic is a comedian or comedienne, so logically, a comic book would be a book about a comedian, huh? Well, Coulton Waugh's book *The Comics* is about the early strip artists, not stand up comedians who do schtick in night clubs. Everyone would have understood that in 1947, but today Waugh's title is misleading.

--Uncle Clay

Dear Clay

I enjoyed reading your explanation of why people collect things [CW 121]. In general I enjoy the newsletter the way it is now, with lots of your opinions and anecdotes. Sure, a lot of your articles are negative but just the fact that you're speaking out gives me hope.

Sincerely,

Jerry Riddle.
Anchorage, Alaska

I ALWAYS TAKE TIME OUT
FROM MY APPOINTED ROUNDS
TO READ CLAY GEERDES'

COMIX WAVE



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 126

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There is a great deal of corruption in the comic business these days and one finds it at the top as well as the bottom. The majors have set out to cheat the young fan-collector and could only succeed with the complicity of the retailers. I just saw a comic book title with five different first issues, all of them numbered 1. Each has a different cover and story. In the past few years we have seen comic books presented in numerous formats designed to relieve the young chump of his lunch money. A single issue of a comic with four different covers so the collector has to buy the same comic four times or suffer the humiliation of having an incomplete collection. Comics with all kinds of gimmicks from book paper to holographic covers push the profits higher while the same old crapola resides between the covers.

Dealers accept all this bullshit and play ball with it. A platinum covered Spiderman was sent only to dealers and they are now claiming it is worth \$350. What horseshit. Since only dealers got the comic, it was an obvious payoff, and they can charge the collector anything they like. It will be \$3500 when the next Guide comes out.

It's logical for dealers to buy low and sell high. But when dealers deliberately hold back contemporary comics they know will be in demand so they can inflate the back issue price, this is nothing but price gouging, ripping off the customer. None of the books that are in the bins are rare. Most have printings far over 100,000, and historically, nothing with that large a print run has ever held its value. Rare is rare and what we are seeing in the nineties is manipulated scarcity. If the fans show an interest in a certain character, what do the dealers do? They quadruple the back issue price on those books that feature the character even if he had nothing but a cameo appearance. At the major conventions, dealers get together at Trade shows and make the best

RUDOLF ISING

[1904-1992]

Rudolf Ising died in July. He was 88. Ising started with Disney in Kansas City in the twenties and went on to help Hugh Harmon form the cartoon unit at Warner Brothers. He worked on the **BOSCO** series which is currently a bit clandestine since Bosco was a little black boy a la Sambo and this type of material is now considered racist. The **L. A. TIMES** obit said Bosco was the first animated film to synchronize movement and speech. Not so. This was done by Disney in **STEAMBOAT WILLIE** in 1928. Warner's issued the first sound film, Jolson's **THE JAZZ SINGER**, in 1927, but it wasn't an animated cartoon.

A comic book and **Star Trek Show** at the San Jose Civic Auditorium August 29 and 30, 1992. Scotty Doohan will be the guest along with Marvel's Johnny Romita and son. Info from 510-222-8663.

deals with each other so there are very few bargains available when the regular fans are allowed into the dealer's room a week later. For a decade or more there was a tacit agreement among those in the business to accept the Overstreet Price Guide as the criteria for grading and pricing comic books, but I have found my local stores charging a lot more than Overstreet when it suits them. On the other hand when I go in to sell or make a trade, they deal with me using Overstreet.

What choice does the fan have? In most communities, there is one comic store and you either deal with the owner or you don't. You can deal through the mail, and you may be lucky and you may not be. One person's Very Good may be someone else's Fine or even Poor. Grading is still according to whim in many parts of the country in spite of Overstreet's special grade book.

Underground collecting never really got off the ground. There are a handful of collectors around the country and all of us in undergrounds know who and where they are. Frankly, there are more than enough copies of the rarest underground books for all who want them. I can think of one or two exceptions, but not many. I suspect there are more Plymell and Donahue ZAPS around than there are people who want to buy them. There are probably more newwave and minicomic collectors than underground collectors. Why? Underground comix were verboten to kids, the seminal collectors. Some grew up reading them on the sly but they had to keep them hidden from the big adult eye and what kid collector wants a collection he can't show off to his buddies?

I'm really upset to see how corrupt the business is becoming. I think the industry manipulation of issue numbers is totally corrupt and that dealers who have given in to the deceitful practices of the Eastern comixopolies are no better than unions who have sold out to management. A comic book store should look out for the young fan collector and guide him toward a collection that will have some real value in the future, not participate in a fraud that will leave him with a lot of worthless number ones.

Ever had this experience. You go in and buy a back issue of a title and you pay the high price and accept the clerk's explanation that the title is rare and gee,

Two new minicomic from Bruce Stengl. **SATIN SATAN** and **RABBITBOY**. 50¢/Stamp each. 633 King St., #13, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

EL VIBORA 150 is \$10 pp from J. M. Berenguer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Some new work by Nazario and others. **KISS COMIX 9** is \$10. Cover by Dave Stevens. Same address. Adults only.

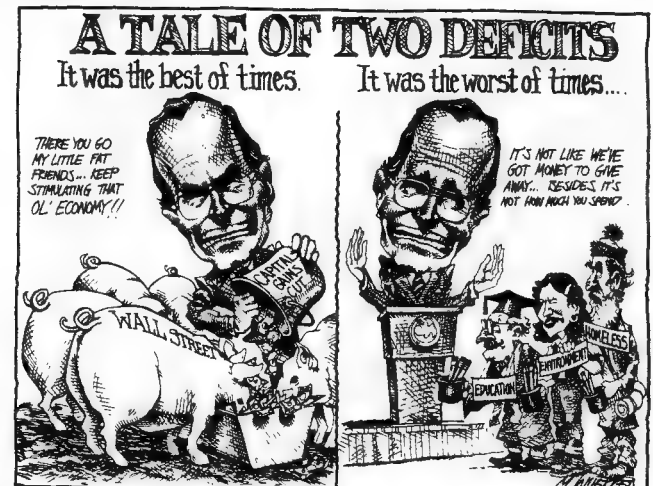
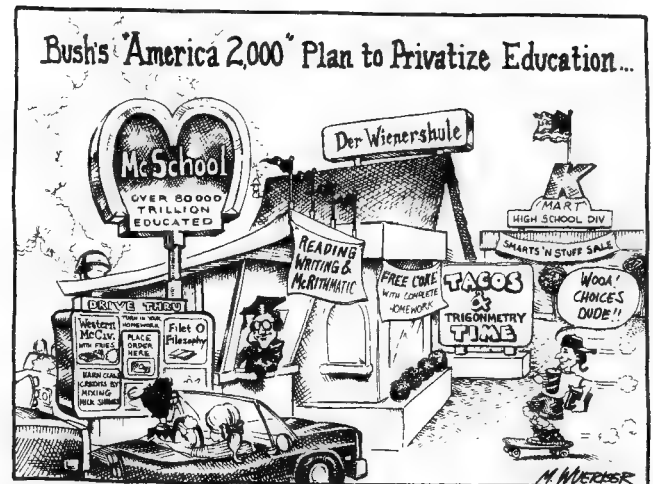
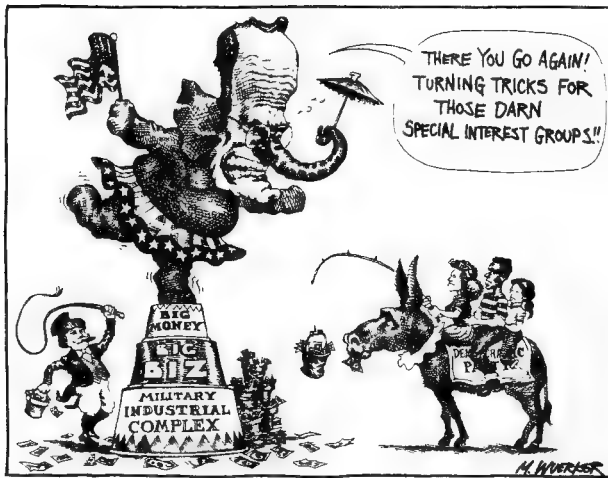
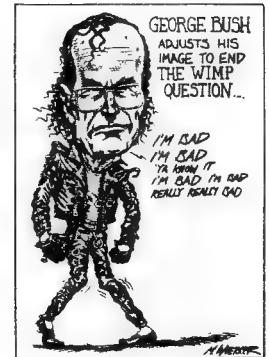
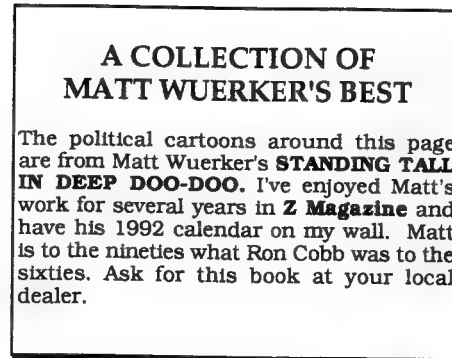
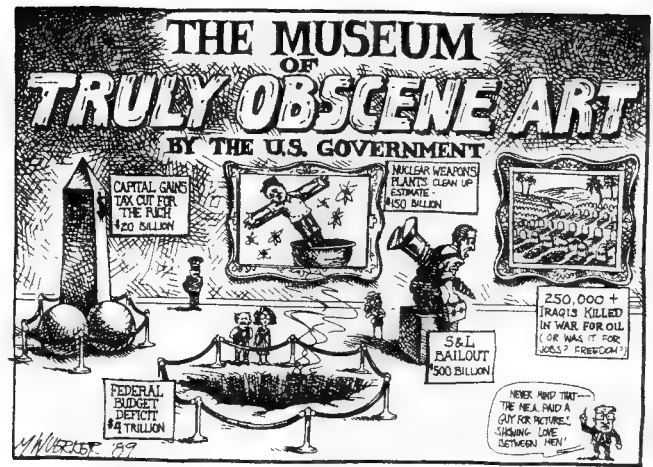
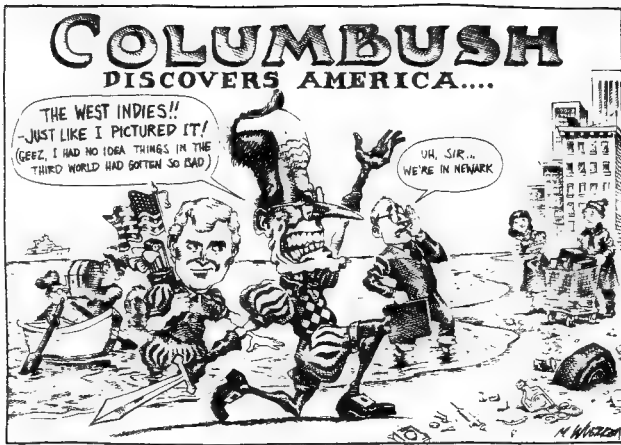
MISC 38 is \$1.50 & .52 postage from Randy Paske, 4841 Birch Lane, Gilbert, MN 55741-8213. The coverless issue of **ALL COVER COMICS #6** is 25¢ & 29¢ post.

In **YAHOO #6**, Susan Catherine tells the story of a stripper's life. Joe Sacco did the artwork. A very accurate description of the sex bar scene. The topless scene was in full bloom in the early seventies when I was writing columns for the Los Angeles **FREE PRESS** and **COAST** and I used to make the rounds to get the latest news. Broadway is now mostly upscale yuppie restaurants and there is a little of the sex scene there as there is Beat culture. Que le temp passe vite.

you're lucky you found one. A few days later you take the same title back and ask another clerk in the same store what he will give you in cash or trade for the book. He offers you practically nothing for the book and tells you they have too many copies of it. A few days ago it was a rare copy and you were lucky to be able to pay the store ten or fifteen bucks for it, now you are hearing that the store has too many copies and they might give you a couple of bucks in trade. So they have a case of those "rare" books on a shelf in the back and they lie about it to make a thousand per cent profit.

Berkeley's comic book and used paperback stores are no different in this game. I have quit buying paperbacks from any of them. I used to enjoy the game of buying and trading, but lately I've been bummed out too often. I will buy a mystery or novel with the understanding that I will read it and return it for a percentage of trade. Just the other day I went into a bookstore on Solano to get trade on a book I decided I didn't like. It was looked over as though it were a dogturd casually placed in the buyer's hand and he said he couldn't take it. Oh, why not? It wasn't in good enough shape. That's interesting. It was in good enough shape for the store to sell it to me the previous day for a couple of bucks. That was the last straw for me with that store. As far as I am concerned, they threw away a long term customer for 75¢ trade. With comic books I've had the experience of doing a trade for x amount based on a grading of, let's say, Fine, and a few days later I see my former book on sale upgraded to VG. Well, that may be just business, but in my mind I have been cheated by the dealer.

WHEN OLIVE OYL tried to assert her independence in a veiled reference to abortion rights Bobby London, the artist who draws her, got the boot. London, who draws the daily "Popeye" comic strip for King Features, says the company told him last week he was being fired for submitting a sequence in which Olive asserts her right to choose. Olive, Popeye's longtime love, is not pregnant in the cartoons. Rather, she receives a baby Bluto doll unsolicited in the mail and she and Popeye discuss returning it using phrases such as "send this baby back to its maker." Two priests overhear them and, believing the subject is abortion, try to rally people against Olive Oyl. "She tells them she can do what she wants to do, because it's her life," London said.



Superman creator Joe Shuster

8/3/92

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Joe Shuster, who changed the dimension of comic books forever 54 years ago when he helped create the invincible Superman, is dead.

The artist was 78 when he died here Thursday at his home of congestive heart failure, authorities said.

Comic books as such were only 5 years old in 1938 when Mr. Shuster and his writer-partner Jerry Siegel convinced the publishers of DC Comics that Superman and his meek alter ego Clark Kent were commercially viable.

Mr. Shuster and Siegel revolutionized the industry overnight with their tales of the Man of Steel.

Both men had come from impoverished childhoods and attended high school together in Cleveland. The first two stories Mr. Shuster and Siegel sold to DC Comics were drawn on brown wrapping paper or wallpaper.

Although their supersonic hero began making money immediately, Mr. Shuster and Siegel had signed the rights to him away for a reported \$130 (single copies of Action Comics were to later sell for \$4,000), and when they sued for more money in 1947, they were fired. Soon, Superman moved to television with additional thousands in royalties pouring in to the comic book company. Even more lucrative feature pictures were to come.

Both men had also lost other court cases for percentages of the Superman products, and in 1975, after what Siegel said "were years of frustration and hell," they took their case to the public:

The campaign worked and an embarrassed Warner Communications Inc. — which controlled the rights to the Superman character — gave Siegel and Mr. Shuster lifetime pensions of \$20,000 each a year.

Wayne McLaren, 51, 'Marlboro man' actor

The Associated Press

COSTA MESA — Wayne McLaren, who portrayed the rugged "Marlboro man" in cigarette ads but became an anti-smoking crusader after developing lung cancer, has died. He was 51.

Mr. McLaren, who smoked for about 25 years and was diagnosed with the disease about two years ago, died Wednesday at Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach.

"He fought a hard battle," his mother, Louise McLaren, said Wednesday. "Some of his last words were: 'Take care of the children. Tobacco will kill you, and I am living proof of it.'"

Last spring, he appeared before a meeting of stockholders of Phillip Morris Inc., maker of Marlboro, and asked them to limit their advertising. He made other public appearances to warn about the dangers of smoking.

FRICION #2 has a cover by Robert Williams and an article about the ZAP artist and painter. **Robert Pasternak** discusses his life and art with Glen Campbell in this issue. \$7 pp from POB 25055, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2V 4C7. a 72 page mag with lots of art.

Robert Pasternak has done a couple of fill-in issues for his **ACID MAN** run with **CW**. These are numbered 1 and 2 and you can get both from me for \$1 and a 29¢ stamp.

Underground writer Tom Veitch is doing the script for that new run of **STAR WARS** from Dark Horse this year. Six issues. Veitch was into poetry and little mags at the tail end of the Beat period in San Francisco. He met Greg Irons and wrote a number of stories for Irons to illustrate in such underground titles as **SLOW DEATH**, **SKULL**, and **DEVIANT SLICE**.

CITY LIMITS GAZETTE is \$15 a year from Steve Willis, POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390. Home of the Bil Keane watch.

WEIRD CITY 4 is \$2 from Dave Szurek, 1206 Wheeler #1, Hoquiam, WA 98550-1901. While WC focuses mostly on horror/SF, he is an opinionated cuss like yours truly and his prose is always enjoyable.

I enjoyed the stories in Colin Upton's **BIG THING 4**. He does autobiographical vignettes a la Harvey Pekar's **AMERICAN SPLENDOR**.

A bit late, because Paul was finishing his autobiography, but no less funny is **THE REALIST 120**. Moe carries it in Berkeley.

Penguin just sent me a minibook by Michael Cader. **THE CAT WHO WOULD BE PRESIDENT**. Illos by Peter Spacek. It's \$6.95. Check your local book chain store.

J. R. Williams was in the Bay Area signing his latest, **BUMMER**, in late July. He appeared at Comic Relief in Berkeley July 25 and in their Haight Street store the following day. Williams' earliest strips and stories were introduced via the Comix Wave Mini-Series in the early 1980's. **SKINBOY** appeared in several minicomix and Williams told a lot of funny stories about his childhood in the **GROWING UP WEIRD** series.

The latest **COMICS F/X** will catch you up on the newwave gossip. \$2.50 pp from 5014-D Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105.

CEREBUS 159 continues Dave Sims' Mothers and Daughters story.

CITY LIMITS GAZETTE is \$15 a year from Steve Willis, POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390. Home of the Bil Keane watch.

CEREBUS 160 continues Dave Sim's Mothers and Daughters story. Dave is on a US tour and you can see him on **September 13** at the Ramada Hotel in Washington, DC. **October 4**, he appears at the Omni Adams Hotel in Phoenix. **October 18** at the Red Lion in Seattle. **November 1** at the Marriott in Portland. **November 15** at the Ramada in New York and **December 15** at the Sheraton Grand in Houston.

For details, call (908) 788-6845.

St. Martin's Press has released Tom Tomorrow's first collection, **GREETINGS FROM THIS MODERN WORLD**.

Get the latest **MAXIMUM TRAFFIC** for \$1 pp from POB 2452, Butler, PA 16003. A mini.

You can become a regular reader of Joe Bob Briggs' **WE ARE THE WEIRD** and keep up on all the worst horror films being made for the video audience. \$2 for a sample. POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. V. VIII, #25, has a nice eulogy for Bill Gaines, the man who told McCarthy and his committee to get fucked. Clay sez check it out.



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 127

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THEY EAT HORSEFLIES. DON'T THEY?

And, yes, entomologophiles, there is a **FOOD INSECTS NEWSLETTER** and the July issue announced the menu for The New York Bug Banquet held at the Explorers Club in Manhattan last May 20. Members of the New York Entomological Society titillated their palates with delicacies like Mealworm balls in zesty tomato sauce, Roasted Australian Kurrajong Grubs, and Thai water bug and mango dip. Dessert included a tasty slice of Chocolate Cricket Torte. The newsletter includes recipes and selected articles on the cultivation of insects for food. I found the summary of Dr. Roger Akre's monograph "Yellowjackets Anyone? A new easily, collected taste treat" pregnant with meaning. The diagram of that little yellowjacket trap did it for me. You can have a copy of this free from the Department of Entomology, 545 Russell Laboratories, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WISC 53706.

Marvel buys maker of Dubble Bubble gum

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J. — Comic book giant Marvel Entertainment Group Inc. will buy Fleer Corp., the maker of Dubble Bubble chewing gum and sports trading cards.

Marvel agreed to buy Fleer, the 107-year-old maker of baseball cards, for \$28 a share, or a total of \$265 million.

The acquisition, approved by the boards of both companies, gives Marvel added muscle in the \$1.2 billion trading card market, which Marvel entered in 1990 with its Marvel Universe cards.

Fleer's stock rose \$2.87 1/2 per share to \$28, the bid price, on the Nasdaq market. Marvel's stock also rose, finishing at \$33.12 1/2, up \$1.62 1/2 on the New York Stock Exchange.

Fleer, a family business founded in 1885 by German immigrants, has more than 500 employees. Fleer sells baseball, football and basketball trading cards.

Marvel is North America's largest creator of comic books, which are translated into 20 languages and sold in 30 countries worldwide.

S. Clay Wilson did the cover for Vampire Mike Kassel's **WILD KINGDOM**. \$3.75 pp from Zeitgeist Press, 4368 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland, CA 94611. Zeitgeist publishes the poetry of Julia Wingard and other Berkeley poets and will send you a list of books.

The current tour of the Grateful Dead has been stalled due to Jerry Garcia's illness and Dennis McNally, a spokesman for the Dead, said "his body has melted down and it's primarily a consequence of cigarettes, no exercise and a diet which tends toward junk. This is not a drug story. This is a health problem, plain and simple." I hate to pop your bubble, Dennis, but Nicotine is not only a drug, but "a poisonous alkaloid" often used as an insecticide [Webster's definition]. In it's liquid state, a tiny amount of nicotine will kill a person. Evan Hunter (Ed McBain) used this information as a basis for his novel POISON. Nicotine was named for Jean Nicot, a French diplomat, circa 1600.

ELVISOLATRY

Next time you make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, you might stop in at the **Elvis Inn**. You can have someone take a picture of you standing next to a 13-foot high statue of the late King of Rock and Roll which dominates the parking lot. The Inn is just off the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway near Abu Ghosh, Israel. Uri Yoell, an Elvis impersonator, opened the Inn 17 years ago. You can see his photos and busts of Elvis and listen to every song the King ever performed.

And, yes, Superman was Jewish. We are reminded of this by Jeff Salamon in his **VILLAGE VOICE** [Aug., 4, 1992] article, "Up, Up, and Oy Vay!: the Further Adventures of Supermensch." Jeff reminds us that the comics industry was a Jewish institution from its inception in the thirties and reviews such recent titles as DC's **RAGMAN**. But Jeff, you forgot about Mike Friedrich's **GOLEM**. It occurred to me long ago that Mary Shelley's **FRANKENSTEIN** was a recent relative of the **GOLEM**, and, hey, the genre is full of Heaps and Things and Hulks, huh? Oh, Jeff, you forgot about Jules Feiffer's **HOSTILEMAN**, too, another historically important yid.

I just read on the front page of a newspaper that Dagwood Bumstead is quitting his job at J. C. Dithers. He's going to work for his wife, Blondie. Funny, these two were married in a strip back in 1929. Dagwood was a rich kid and Blondie Boopadoop was a young flapper. Dag's parents disapproved and disinherited the kid so he had to go to work for a living. By the forties, **BLONDIE** had settled into the ultimate middle-class formula strip, one imitated by hundreds of television sitcoms. Dag was born about 1909 if he was 20 in 1929, so he's about 83 now. Kids all grown up, married, grandkids, maybe great grandkids, huh? Why not? Why don't characters age? Old J. C. Dithers would be about 113 now. Ah, well, fantasy and all that. The way he ate, Dag would be long gone with a heart attack.

CEREBUS 161 continues Sim's *Mothers and Daughters* series.

Some very funny sex panels in Worden's **FREAK FUCKS**. Adults only and all that. \$2 from Starhead, POB 30044, Seattle, WA 98103.

I like to watch movies over and over and a lot of people fail to understand why. Well, you don't visit a good friend once and desert him. I've been a movie fan since childhood and I enjoy watching the movies I saw back then for different reasons today. My Dad used to take me to see Tim Holt and Tim McCoy and Roy Rogers. He loved Westerns. When I watch one of them today it is like visiting with my Dad for a little while. When I feel like taking a vacation I can't afford, I put on one of my James Bond videos and go to Paris or the Aegean Sea or the Bahamas. I have my favorite actors and actresses and sometimes I feel like seeing them in the same way I would visit a close friend. I pop in the tape and there they are, doing things that are familiar to me. I can trust these movies in a way I can't trust many of the new ones. I know how things will come out and I can relax with the certainty that I will not become fond of someone just to see them slaughtered a few scenes later.



Dear Clay,

It seems to me that we are seeing a lot more articles about comics and related pubs in the local papers these days. When I was a kid in the fifties, you only saw an article about comics that was positive once in a blue moon. Any thoughts on this?

Errol Bridges

Dear Errol,

I have thoughts about everything. But, seriously, now that there is a comic book store in just about every little town in the U. S. and an annual cycle of comic fairs and conventions, it is logical to realize that the comics community constitutes a substantial market for advertising. I suspect if you browse those papers that run puff pieces about how much those great old funny books your mom tossed out are worth you will discover paid ads by some of the local comic book and baseball card stores. I don't know how it works where you live, but here in the Bay Area when one of the weekend throwaways is considering a puff piece on the Batman sequel and related comic book fallout the editors that be will send an ad rep around to all the comic book stores and publishers to hustle display ads to run adjacent to the article. Hell, for the right price, they will even spill the article around a display ad for your store.

If you read these articles you will find the usual nostalgic horseshit. If the writer is cynical or critical about the

product, goodbye ads, huh? And, no, I'm not troubled by this sort of thing anymore than I am about the new VNS stuff. Video News Service provides disguised promo for products and services. The footage is given to the evening news people and is often run as though it were indeed gathered news instead of carefully designed hype. Some people are upset by this, but I say 99% of what is called news is nothing but hype for capitalism so why would I get bugged by the VNS clips? Sure, they ought to be labeled ads. That would be the honest thing, but since when has the news been honest? That bullshit war against Iraq was nothing but a grandiose ad for American hi-tech weaponry.

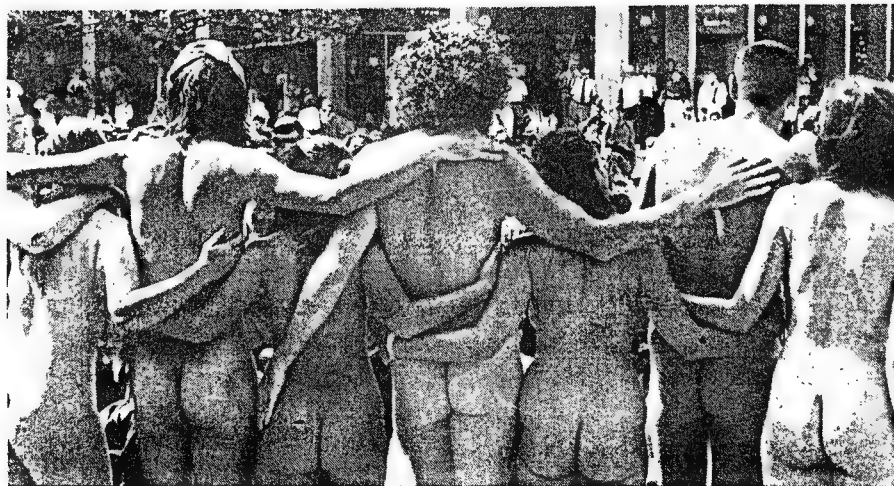
People who want to know the truth about things ignore television anyway. They go to the journals and the books. For long think pieces on comics and their creators, we read **THE COMICS JOURNAL**. I'll bet I have fifty articles in my filing cabinet done by working journalists that say basically the same thing about comic books. Gee, they're worth a lotta money now. Their moms tossed them out or they'd be as rich as Bruce Hamilton today. And the focus is always on superheroes and never on the stuff most of us really love [for me, Barks' ducks, Stanley's Little Lulu, Capp's Li'l Abner and Fearless Fosdick, Holman's Smokey Stover, Marston's Wonder Woman, and Cliff Sterrett's Polly and Her Pals]. I have written the article many times myself.

We are living in the age of superhype. I don't want to suggest that the product we see the most of has the least value, though I could make a good argument against most soft drinks and junk foods along with the "super" heroes they are associated with, but I will suggest that most of us would be just as well off if we missed the latest chapters of megaseriels like **ALIENS** and **BATMAN**. Hey, if it's the feeling you want, go back and watch the first one. The first **ALIEN** was truly a terrifying experience and I left the theater impressed. The second one was so overdone I felt like I had spent the evening inside a Congo drum during a jam session.

-Clay



BIG DADDY ROTH'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY IS OUT. LOOK FOR CONFESSIONS OF A RAT FINK AT YOUR LOCAL COMIC STORE!



CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE 128

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THE NAKED AND THE NUDE

And, yes, there are nude people in Berkeley. All of us, as a matter of fact. But last week a group showed up on the steps of Sproul Hall, sacred since the Free Speech Movement of 1964, and exhibit their alls and sundries to the Evian and quiche crowd sitting around on the steps of the Student Union Building. The male and female exhibitionists called themselves the **X-plicit Players**. They were not busted because the campus cops do not bust naked people unless someone calls in a complaint and no one did. Too bad. It would have been fun to think about the stories they would have had to tell when they showed up with a paddywagon filled with naked students. All John Does, of course, because where would they have kept their IDs? Nudism is nothing new around here. There were nude-ins back in the sixties, some of them sponsored by outfits like the **Sexual Freedom League**, but a lot of them spontaneous responses to the summer sun. I can't think of a be-in or love-in in Provo or Golden Gate Park where there weren't some nude people dancing around in front of the bandstand. A lot of those happy stoned people must have suffered some serious sunburn. There have been nude beaches around here for some years. San Gregorio and Black's [near San Diego] as well as Stinson over in Marin, but on campus nudity? Well, if it catches on, I suspect it will be good for camcorder sales. I didn't see the news slips of that nude-in by the **X-plicits**, but I'm told it ran. I doubt that the networks passed on anything but a few quick bun shots, but you never know. I can only remember one time when I ever saw an actual dick on national Tv. It was during that controversy over women reporters being allowed in the locker rooms after football games. A channel four reporter [male] was in the locker room at Candlestick after a game asking

for opinions and the camera was loose and behind the reporter was this big black football player drying himself with a towel. The cameraman tightened up the shot in a few seconds, but they were live and I suspect one player's family had some explaining to do to the little ones that night. Ah, what can I tell you? We live in a world where it's okay for Madonna to play with her genitals on MTV as long as they are covered with a teddy, but football players are all warned before every televised game to be sure they don't touch certain areas of their body. Bill Cosby did a routine about this on one of his first comedy albums. He played for Temple.

Nota Bene: A 19-year-old junior named Andrew Martinez attended classes in the nude for nearly two weeks and no one filed a complaint. His profs said nothing. A woman in one of his classes said "...well, I just don't exactly look at him. But I think it's kind of cute." It? What's this it? Andy's parents live in Cupertino, a posh beach resort town down the Coast. He said he fought with them about his nudity and ended up moving out. He has been arrested a couple of times, once for jogging in his clogs and backpack near College Avenue and his Mom called him up and said she thought it was time for them to talk. Andy is supported by the Western Sunbathing Association and is quite candied about his nude persona. He's about 6'3". Not someone you would be likely to miss. Reminds me of that episode of **MONTY PYTHON** wherein John Cleese is teaching sex to a class of students. Ends up with him having sex with a woman on top of his desk in front of the class while people whisper about their assignments or nod off from boredom. But this nudity craze may spread. My spies tell me there are a couple of women going about Berkeley sans tops. I mentioned this to a woman the other night and she told me she often rode her bicycle topless. Men, of course, have gone topless for years. Kirk Douglas in *Spartacus*. Arnie Schwarzenegger in countless grunt and groaners. Tourism, I read in the local hypesheet, is down 30% around here due to the recent race riots; maybe nudism will bring back the customers.

Clay Geerdes
Comix Wave



It's true what Andy Warhol, the only artist ever quoted in the Reagan era said, but when you get your fifteen minutes you're going to be reduced to a photo op and a soundbite, and they're going to be the truth about you long after you're gone. In the eighties television reached critical mass, reached the saturation point. It was no longer only the thing that takes the place of the fireplace, the thing we gather round to hear of myth and story; TV had by the eighties become not the final arbiter of reality, but reality itself. We are no longer obsessed with television we are addicted to it (half the people in the stadium watch the game on the monitors, half the people at the convention watch the demonstration on the monitors). It isn't enough that they're experiencing it; it isn't real unless it's ratified, and television is the ratifier.

Peggy Noonan

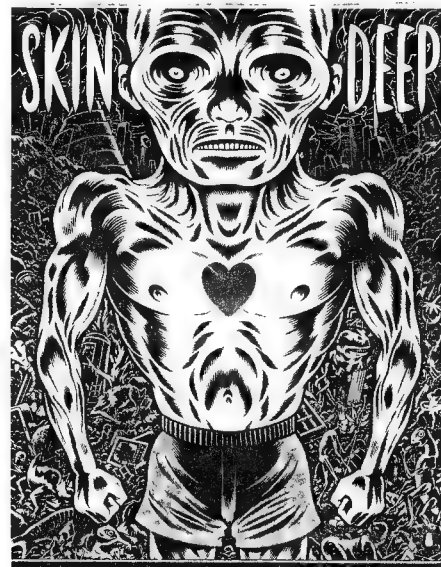
What I Saw at the Revolution A Political Life in the Reagan Era, 1990.

In case you thought Berkeley was the hotbed of teen angst and anarchy, check out the cover of **EL VIBORA 151** whereon a pair of subteen punks flip the bird to an officer of the Policia Nacional. A Freak Brothers story and a new grossout by **SQUEAK THE MOUSE**. \$10 pp from J. M. Berenguer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Another orgiastic issue of that totally unabashed hardcore sex comic **KISS** [#10] is available for \$10 from the same address. Adults only for all underground comix.

CEREBUS 162 continues Dave Sim's Mothers and Daughters series. Check your local store.

Joe Bob Briggs takes on the Men's Movement in **IRON JOE BOB**, a new book. \$19 for an autographed copy from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. Send three more bucks and get the latest copy of **WE ARE THE WEIRD**.

Penguin has just released Charles Burns' new paperback **SKIN DEEP: TALES OF DOOMED ROMANCE**. reprinted are "Dog Days," "Burn Again," and "A Marriage Made in Hell," three stories which were serialized in the past couple of years. Locally, I saw them in the East Bay **EXPRESS**.



TALES OF DOOMED ROMANCE BY CHARLES BURNS

Patrice Apodaca did an article about Malibu Comics called **ADVENTURE CAPITALISTS** in the Los Angeles **TIMES** for October 13, 1992. It was in the Valley Business mag. Basically a puff piece for the new line of books created by Image Comics. Contains a bio of Scott Rosenberg who founded Malibu in 1986.

Send Ritchie Prosch \$1/stamp and get **FARM BOY FUNNIES 3 and 4**. 305 Pinehaven, Laurens, SC 29360. Ritchie's cartooning for the local paper and learning about Southern politics.

I would not expect substantial changes under a Clinton administration. These policies of trying to maintain the third world as a kind of private corporate free-fire zone--a high repression and cheap labor region which provides resources and investment opportunities and markets--those are bipartisan policies which go back very, very far...in fact, to the origins of our republic in many ways. What we have to do is carry out significant domestic changes which will lead to democratization internally. We are a very free society in many respects. The most free country in the world. In free speech for example, or in the limits of the state to coerce. On the other hand, in other respects, we just don't have a functioning democracy. This current political campaign is a perfectly good example. What we have is: the public is given a choice between two representatives of essentially the same business interests who differ marginally on tactics and policies, but even then, not very substantially. Perot is a *maverick* who comes from the outside, but who obviously represents those same business interests except he happens to be an individual. There's very little public input into the political system. Furthermore, this is a matter of principal. This kind of doctrinal framework has been very well described, perhaps most clearly by Walter Lippman, the Dean of American journalists and the leading progressive democratic theorist. He laid it out very candidly. He said that in a democratic society the people have a role: their role is to be spectators who every couple of years are given the opportunity to lend their weight behind one or another member of the leadership class, and then they are supposed to go home and be spectators again. That's pretty much the way it works. And if it works that way we will have democratic forms but not a functioning democracy.

--Noam Chomsky

Sometimes I think we would have done a lot better by getting them hooked on our life-style than by trying to do it with guns. Give them credit cards. Make them dependent on television and sugar. Blue jeans works better than bombs. You can take blue jeans and rock 'n' roll records and win over more countries than you can with soldiers.

-Reginald Edwards
BLOODS: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR BY BLACK VETERANS. [Ed Wallace Terry, 1984]

This White House is like a beautiful clock that makes all the right sounds, but when you open it up, there is nothing inside.

Peggy Noonan
What I Saw at the Revolution
A Political Life in the Reagan Era, 1990.

Lots of people avoid political discussion because it forces them to examine not only their assumptions about present social/economic arrangements, but their complicity in them. The dishonest avoid political discussion by diverting attention to what they are likely to describe as their opponents bad manners or their *negativity*, or their discomfiting passion, or their simple failure to be Nice Persons, the last the sine qua non of liberal Mendocino County political discussion.

Bruce Anderson
Anderson Valley Advertiser

...the president's top aides who planned the day, were no longer just part of the story--it was as if they were the producers of the story. They were the line producers of a show called **WHITE HOUSE** with Ronald Reagan as the President. And this wasn't particular to that White House, it was simply a trend that achieved its fullness in the Reagan era.

Peggy Noonan
What I Saw at the Revolution
A Political Life in the Reagan Era, 1990.

BY CLAY GEERDES

THE SLEEPY LITTLE ENGINE. A children's story to be read to kids with trains on the brain.

\$2.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME ONE. A group of essays about my early life for those readers who have always wondered who the hell Clay Geerdes is and what he is really like.

\$3.50 pp.

ESSAYS: VOLUME TWO. More general essays, a couple of which have appeared in **COMIX WAVE** or elsewhere.

\$3.50 pp.

Together with the teaching in the schools, the national media preserve the myths that the society deems precious, reassuring their patrons that all is well, that the American truths remain securely in place, that the banks are safe, our generals competent, our presidents interested in the common welfare, our artists capable of masterpieces, our weapons invincible, and our democratic institutions the wonder of the admiring world. By telling their audiences what they assume they already know, the news media reflect what the society at the moment wants to believe about itself.

Lewis Lapham
Harper's, September, 1992.

HOW THE PAINTED SEE THE PAINTER

...I realized all of a sudden that these men who painted women, who talked about objectivity and observation, the truth of the moment, the truth of a feeling--were not recording the external world at all. All they were doing was revealing, time and again, the needs and anxieties of their own natures. However much they dressed it up afterwards and talked about Art, all that they were doing was painting women who ceased to exist as women the minute they mounted the dais. Once captured on canvas these women, whether they are sulky, provocative, vulnerable or devouring--have no personality of their own. A woman, for a painter, is not the blessed Muse; she is simply a suitable and saleable receptacle for the rag-bag of worries that every man carries with him like a child carried an old blanket.

-SARAH BAYLIS
-UTRILLO'S MOTHER

The television ad used to be a microcosm of the movie. Now the movie is a microcosm of the ad!

Today a popstar, tomorrow a soft drink!

Intellectual Relish

by Emm Ess

IT WAS A SMALL NEWS CLIPPING THAT I CAN NO LONGER LOCATE, SO SOME OF THE DETAILS ARE SKETCHY BUT A CELEBRATION WAS IN PROGRESS.



THE HONORED GUESTS WERE RE-KNOWNED MODERN ARTISTS, ANDY WARHOL AND SALVADOR DALI. IT MAY HAVE BEEN A MUTUAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION BECAUSE THE CLIMAX OF THE EVENING WAS TO BE AN EXCHANGE OF GIFTS BETWEEN THE TWO.



THE GROWING ANTICIPATION AROUND THE UNVEILING OF THE GIFTS WAS LIKE AN ELECTRIC CURRENT BUILDING IN THE ROOM. ANDY WARHOL WAS FIRST TO PRESENT MR. DALI WITH A TOKEN OF HIS ADMIRATION AND ESTEEM.



THE GIFT WAS ONE OF ANDY'S TRADEMARK, BIG, BEAUTIFUL, 'JUST SO' PAINTINGS AND THE OOZE AND AWES ROSE DRA-MATICALLY IN THE ROOM.



SALVADOR DALI GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED THE GIFT AND IN TURN PRESENTED ANDY WITH TWO, LARGE, PLASTIC BAGS FULL OF GARBAGE FROM MR. DALI'S ART STUDIO.



AN EXPRESSION OF SMUG EXPECTATION FELL FROM WARHOL'S FACE AND HIT THE FLOOR WITH A STUNNING SILENCE. THE GUESTS, FOLLOWED ON CUE BUT FOR A FLUTTER OF ALCOHOLIC SNICKERS.



SALVADOR DALI THEN TURNED AND SNAPPED THE CROWD OUT OF ITS STUPOR WITH HIS ANIMATED ORCHESTRATION OF THE FESTIVITIES. ANDY REMAINED HURT AND RESENT-FUL.



DURING A REFLECTIVE MOMENT, DALI WONDERED IF PERHAPS HE HADN'T THROWN AWAY SOME IN-CRIMINATING ITEMS. WARHOL, TEARING INTO A BAG, FOUND HIMSELF OVERWHELMED BY THE PERSONAL AND REVEALING NATURE OF HIS GIFT OF GAR-BAGE.



Comix

Wave

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CES VOIS D'ENFANTS

All I know is what I read in the Chronicle. It's 'pretentious' when Sinead O'Connor tears up the Pope's picture on Saturday night live [10/3/92 episode], but it's 'provocative' when '\$60 million woman' Madonna plays dominatrix on her *Erotica* video. "...the video, while inappropriate for children, is really a satire about how little it takes to generate outrage," said Newsday's John Anderson in the Chron reprint of his ad/review. Chron flack John Carmen smarmily noted that the cast of SNL crowded around Tim Robbins and ignored O'Connor at the end of the show, but, gee, maybe they just weren't into bald women. Personally, I like O'Connor. It takes a lot of guts to go up against a sacred cow on national TV and no guts at all to make snotty remarks in a corporate promo sheet like the Chron. That major daily is mostly disinformation and satire itself. In the same issue that smears O'Connor and praises Madonna, a Chron editor juxtaposed a Dan Quayle visit to San Francisco with an article about New York urologist John Lattimer who claims he has Napoleon's dick in a jar. Hey, this is a real completist collector here. Another Dr. Mengele. Said Madonna: "I think there's a better way to present her ideas rather than ripping up an image that means a lot to other people," this from a woman whose MTVs are often sacreligious. Joe Pesci didn't like O'Connor's theatrical gesture and he put her down for bumming out the SNL cast. Joe was on Arsenio's show to promote **THE PUBLIC EYE**. His career has taken off since **LETHAL WEAPON 2** and **GOOD FELLAS**. Kelly Coffield did Sinead O'Connor to James Carrey's Jay Leno on **IN LIVING COLOR** and you can bet half the stand up comics around the country are going to be tearing up pictures of someone in their acts for the next few weeks. On Friday, October 16, Fred Gardner noted that the "rich hipsters in the audience booed Sinead O'Connor offstage" at a Madison Square Garden tribute to Bob Dylan. Can it be they have forgotten his "motorcycle black madonna two-wheeled gypsy queen" line? Gardner writes a regular column for the **Anderson Valley Advertiser**, America's last Underground Newspaper. Not a Bene--Robert Crumb grew up Catholic and one of his first cartoons depicted a little Snoidlike character peeking up a nun's habit on the cover of the first **YELLOW DOG** tabloid. Tsk! Tsk! No wonder he was never asked to guest on *Donahue*. Question is, will Donahue, an Irish Catholic, have O'Connor on his show and exploit the Pope incident or will it slide into popcult history?

I just got around to reading the collection of Bobby London's **MONDO POPEYE** strips put out by St. Martin's Press. A lot of funny stuff. With the plethora of Popeye reprints around, you would never think Elsie Segar only did the strip for eight years. All the biographical information on London in **MONDO POPEYE** is suspect. Some of it is just plain wrong, whether on purpose or not, I don't know, but let me correct it here. Bobby London's **DIRTY DUCK** stuff originated in Dan O'Neill's Air Pirates Studio and appeared in the various **AIR PIRATES FUNNIES**. The strip never originated in the Los Angeles **FREE PRESS** in 1971. What was in that paper for which I was a regular reporter at the time was Gilbert Shelton's weekly page featuring the **FABULOUS FURRY FREAK BROTHERS**. **FREEP** did not run any other strip regularly, though we did run Ron Cobb's political cartoons and some of those of Ed Badajos. London did his duck strip for the Air Pirates comics and from July, 1969, to around 1972 for the **BERKELEY TRIBE**. His work appears in **LEFT FIELD FUNNIES** and in **DOPIN' DAN** and I recall that he contributed something to **THE FACTS OF LIFE FUNNIES** published by Rip Off Press. As for Segar, he sold **THIMBLE THEATER** to the syndicate in 1919, but Popeye wasn't created until 1929. Popeye was introduced into the strip when Castor Oil needed someone to sail a ship for him. The first appearance of Popeye was on January 17, 1929. He was licensed to Fleischer Studios and animated in 1932, appearing in a cameo role in a Betty Boop Cartoon. Segar died of cancer in 1938 and his fishing buddy Bud Sagendorf did most of the work that last year or so. Dell printed the first four-color **POPEYE** comic books and **POPEYE** had his own title in 1948. All of the strips have been reprinted in book form in the past few years by Fantagraphics and Robert Altman directed the most recent film about **POPEYE** in 1981. Robin Williams played the sailor and Shelley Duvall was Olive. Popeye was the original superhero, the first comic character with super strength and probably a subliminal influence upon Philip Wylie whose 1930 novel **GLADIATOR** was "adapted" by Jerry Siegel into **SUPERMAN** in 1932. Personally, I can't remember a time when **POPEYE** wasn't popular. William Faulkner even named a character for him in his 1930 novel **SANTUARY**. London's **MONDO POPEYE** is very well done. It keeps to the spirit of Segar's character while bringing in contemporary styles and ideas. London pokes fun at yuppie behavior and seems to have a good time with these two panel gag strips. As you know, he's off the strip for putting in material that was unacceptable to the bluenoses who control the strip scene. It's okay for Madonna and Michael Jackson and Prince et al to do outrageous things on MTV, but try to get anything relevant into a newspaper strip and hypocrisy trickles down on you from above.

CITY LIMITS GAZETTE is \$15 a year from Steve Willis, POB 390, McCleary, WA 98557-0390. Home of the Bil Keane watch. Clark Dissmeyer expands the parameters of the watch in the current issue. Incidentally, I like the idea of a Comics Journal index as well as an expanded one for other fanzines, but for the list to be at all useful to the scholar it will have to be annotated and the primary texts will have to be available in a library somewhere. I would like to see those articles which have historical value stored on microfilm and available through interlibrary loan. One problem that occurs to me is that many of the articles that appear in zines are little more than egoboo and hype for the going product. Some even hype zines that never made it to the printer. After a year or so writing about comics, I learned not to say a lot about books I did not have safely in hand, because the best laid plans... In the heyday of underground comix, artists were so ecstatic at being in demand that they often said yes to far more projects that they could possibly draw with the result that a number of books in progress remained little more unfulfilled promises.

A twelfth issue of **THE FABULOUS FURRY FREAK BROTHERS** will be out this October. Ordering information from 1-800-468-2669.

Brad Foster has done it again, this time with another hit of outrageous erotica dedicated to the illustration of the major sex scandals of The Bible. The first volume of **THE BAWDY BIBLE** features an adaptation of The Book of Esther by Foster and Jim Thompson. It's \$6 pp from POB 165246, Irving, TX 75016, and yes, you need an age statement stating you're over 21 or 18 along with your order.

You can get 64 pages of Skip Williamson's outtakes for \$5 pp, POB 5496, River Forest, IL 60305-5496. Skip's contribution to the underground was Snappy Sammy Smoot. This new book is called **NAKED HOSTILITY**. A signed and numbered copy if \$25.

Terry Laban's new title is **CUD**. #2 should be out this November. Laban's editorial cartoons appear regularly in **IN THESE TIMES**.

ART FOR THE RICH

And here they were again in the flesh, feeding off my fantasies, absorbing them. I had always suspected that silvery people like that needed other deeper roots to feed them. Out of their mean lives, from furnaces which never touched them, people like me forged the artifacts which they took as their own, embalming them in art galleries and museums, safely locking them away for their own delectation. The creations of outsiders like myself were the food of the rich, without them the beauty, the sheer flamboyance of their lives would wither and die. They fed on the black muck of their lives, their petals grew sheeny on the stink. It was happening right in front of me, you could almost see it oozing off the walls. It wasn't that I felt superior to anything, Far from it. Those people out there were tigers. I was no match for them on nearly every level.

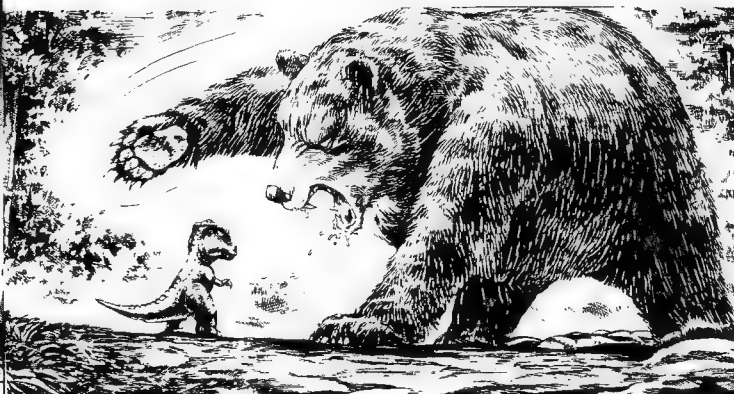
Rosie Scott in **GLORY DAYS**, 1988.

El demonio
en el corazón
TSUKIKAGE

EL RIFLE CON SILENCIADOR SUBMARINO

MANGA

The artwork around this blurb is from the **EL VIBORA** special on **Manga**, Japanese comic art. You can get this special and other publications in Spanish from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona Spain. \$10 pp. **KISS COMIX 10** is also \$10. Adults only.

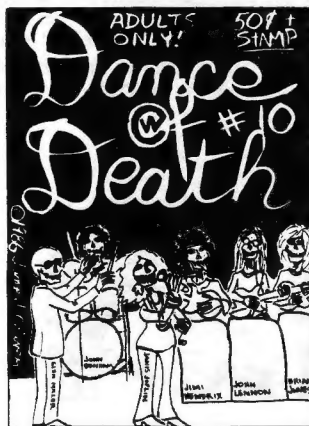
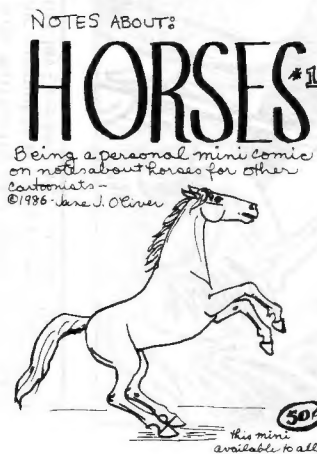




JANE JENKINS OLIVER
[1954-1992]

I met Jane Oliver for the first time at a Peace Festival on the campus of Sonoma State College where I was teaching in the English Department in 1969. She was smiling and friendly and I remember taking a picture of her. We went for a walk and talked, probably about the anti-war movement and a lot of the things that were happening at that time. I left the campus in 1970 and a decade came and went. I worked with Vito's Free Store Theater in Cotati and settled down in Berkeley where I worked on several comic conventions and fairs. I started my newsletter in 1973 and one of my earliest subscribers was none other than Jane Oliver. By the end of the seventies we were into the minicomix, the Newave, and, after a first comic dedicated to the Beatles (**The Beagles Looney Hearts Club**), Jane began to do her regular titles, **PAGAN COMIX**, **VAMPIRE VIGNETTES**, and **DANCE OF DEATH** as part of the **COMIX WORLD MINI-SERIES**. Jane's alter-ego was a vampire she named Jerry and she began publishing a standard sized comic book about him, **TALES OF JERRY THE STONED VAMPIRE** in 1978. She loved horses and did a minicomic that gave detailed instructions to other cartoonists about how to draw a horse correctly. Jane wrote to me often and asked me how to promote her books and projects and I encouraged her, as I did others, to send copies to people who might write reviews. I urged her to attend any conventions in her area, particularly the San Diego Con. In the early seventies, this con was held at the El Cortez Hotel in San Diego, and it was small enough to maintain the feeling of a gathering of family and friends. Jane showed up with her portfolio and some of her **JERRYS** in 1978 and, as far as I know, she has been a regular for the past fourteen years.

Jane loved the comix and she enjoyed the network of friends she made through the minis. We all did. Those were fun days. Coming up with new titles, getting them into print right away, trading with other people, jamming on projects; hey, jamming with each other in Harry's Bar in San Diego or out by the pool at the El Cortez, drawing characters in each other's sketchbooks. I looked forward to getting together with everyone each Summer and I would keep after people in the newsletter, telling them to be sure to get down to the con. For a couple of years, we would get together in the hotel



restaurant for breakfast and I remember one time when we had about a dozen cartoonists there, all from different parts of the country. Jane was there. Jim Williams came down from Portland. Dave Miller. Brad Foster from Irving, Texas. Those meetings were the culmination of a year of corresponding and drawing. I had urged people to publish their own minis since **COMIX WORLD 24** and the number of titles had become legion. Jane started **VAMPIRE VIGNETTES** in June of 1980, and she had other people sending her panels for **DANCE OF DEATH** by January of 1981. Foster was doing his **GOODIES** series. There would usually be a couple of jam comix done at the cons. Roger May put one together at each con. There was a great deal of camaraderie within the group in those days and strong friendships formed. Some of us went to other cons like Creation or Bay Con and lately we've been getting together at Wonder Con in Oakland. At one, I had the pleasure of seeing Jane's new son, Justin. He was a beautiful little boy, introduced to the world of cartooning almost from birth, because his mother wasn't about to miss a con.

I saw Jane at Wonder Con in 1991 and she told me about her cancer. She was at Wonder Con again this past Spring, sitting there in the artists' alley with her latest issue of **TALES OF JERRY**, smiling and talking to people, drawing little sketches of Jerry in program books. I talked to her for a few minutes, then moved on with the flow of people, not knowing I would not see her again. She died Saturday, August 22, in Sebastopol, California. Born July 7, 1954, in Houston, Texas, Jane got her BFA in Studio Art from Sonoma State College in 1979. She lived with Phil Hirsch with whom she had worked on the band **FELIX CULPA**.

Always a loyal Beatle fan, Jane had suddenly become interested in Jim Morrison and she had some drawings of him at her table. Perhaps she knew she would be meeting him and John Lennon quite soon. Many of the drawings in her comix seem prophetic right now. Funny, I'm sitting here in Berkeley writing this and I can see Jane in my mind's eye smiling and dancing in the afternoon sunshine up in Sonoma County, not at all the sort of place one would expect to find Jerry the Vampire. Jane was a loving, caring person and I expect many of you who knew her will cherish her memory as I will.

-Clay Geerdes 11/5/92

Dear Clay,

I'd still like to read more about what seems to me to be a shift in your writings about the direction contemporary society is taking. In the early years of **COMIX WORLD**, it seemed to me that you shared the belief that so many of us held--that dramatic change was possible because a new generation (our generation) was emerging that would make the changes by insisting on them. At the time, it seemed that power to effect change came with the belief that one had it. In recent issues of **COMIX WAVE** it seems that you feel society is run by corporations whose control is so strong and so pervasive that it is doubtful that things can be changed. Is that at all a fair characterization of a shift in your writings?

---Jay Kennedy

Question is, would Jay have written me the same letter after the major defeat of the Reagan/Bush administration as he did before? And would I have answered it the same or in a different manner? While I am sure my Republican readers are weeping in their beer at this moment, I am equally sure the rest of you are somewhat elated at the end of what has to be one of the lows in American history. Just what we can expect out of the upcoming Razorback White House is anybody's guess, but most of the people I have talked to feel more positive then negative about it. Just the appearance of a couple of handsome younger men on the tube makes an incredible psychological impact on the young of the country. They buried the Bushes over in San Francisco, you know. Nice symbolic funeral with a coffin. Some people carried signs reading **HASTA LA VISTA, ASSHOLE!** If you've watched Arnie Schwartznegger chumming it up with George Bush on tv, you understand the sign. Big Arnie has come a long way from the **FUCK YOU, ASSHOLE!** in **TERMINATOR 1** to **HASTA LA VISTA, ASSHOLE!** in **TERMINATOR 2**.

Jay, I'm twenty years older than I was when I started my newsletter. I was still a street reporter, still a photographer, still getting in people's hair, churning out stories and articles, trying to pay the rent, looking for peace, love, happiness, not at all settled into who and what I was going to be. I remember when Fred Burkhardt was doing his **PORTABLE FANZINE** out of Ohio and I was sending him stuff and referring him to people, so I sent him a piece I did on The Cockettes, a gay theater commune that did mock musicals out in North Beach circa 1969-70. It was just one of the many different things I wrote in those days, one stop on my route, but Crumb saw it and he sent Burkhardt a letter, asking him, "Who is this guy Geerdes, a faggot?" Because,

obviously, anyone who writes an article about a gay theater company or drag queens must be gay, huh? Couldn't be that The Cockettes were just a part of the overall underground culture like the Nickettes or the Underground Cinema out at Presidio or the happenings at Project Artaud or the street theater of the San Francisco Mime Troupe or Zap Comix. Anyway, I got a kick out of that exchange. I hadn't met Crumb at that time. Kept missing him. He was never in Gary Arlington's store when I was out there. The first time I saw him was actually funny, because, you see, I knew what he and his wife, Dana, looked like, but they had no idea what I looked like, so I was eating some of that good roast beef at the US cafe on Columbus and there were Crumb and his wife, Dana, right at the next table, eating just like normal folks. They were talking about music and people they knew that I didn't know and this and that. What a lousy papparazzo, huh? I didn't invade Crumb's dinner, ask a lot of questions, shoot flash pictures of him, embarrass his wife--well, what can I say? That just wasn't me. I sort of grinned about the situation, because it was one I had numerous times in my career. Celebrities, you realize, are the visible people, while the rest of us are relatively invisible nonentities.

When you're a celebrity, it's easy to stereotype people. If someone comes around, what does he want? I spent a lot of time around people who thought of themselves as celebrities and typecast me as a groupie. Fact is, I may be a groupie in certain cases, but that was seldom true in the cases where others thought I was. Artist ego is large, even when the artist is only known to a handful of close friends, and I've experienced hauteur from artists I could have cared less about. I've been snubbed by minor actors in little theater productions and treated poorly by directors who thought a lot more of themselves than I did. You understand, most of the time, I was just going along day to day, seeing and enjoying things, reading, writing, taking pictures, making up articles, inventing things to do, chasing women, and for me, one story was as good as another. If one scene started to bore me, I went to another one. I hung around the San Francisco Art Institute a year or so, because I had a good time with George Kuchar and his students. I got a kick out of being in some of their movies and going around the city to different settings. I wrote about that underground film scene because I write about whatever I do or whatever happens to me. I had no ax to grind. I wasn't interested in a career as an actor or filmmaker. Nor was I gay, but I did enjoy hanging around the Palace when the Cockettes were grossing everyone out with their midnight parodies of old Hollywood movies.

As an aside, it was not Crumb who treated me shabbily. When we finally met in 1975, he was quite friendly. He was doing **WEIRDO** then and he expressed an interest in the **Comix Wave Mini-Series** and told me he would run a six page spread on it if I wrote it up and sent it to him. Well, the deal was, I'd get \$300 for the six pages and I would split the money up among the artists whose covers were used. I sent the stuff and went on with my work, figuring it would happen when and if. Well, it came out in **WEIRDO 4**, I believe, and it was four pages, not six. Crumb wrote a text of his own. Mine wasn't used. I was paid nothing by Ron Turner, who, I suspect, decided to consider it all promo for my trip. But that wasn't the deal I made with Crumb. Since I had told the various artists whose art was used that there would be some money, I now had the unpleasant task of telling them all that the deal had changed and there would be no money. Not only that, but I couldn't write it up in **CW**, because I would be calling Crumb a welcher and a lot of the artists were still trying to butter him up so they could get some space in **WEIRDO**.

So, in my estimation, there has been a lot of bad karma in this underground trip. I have not been treated well over the years and it has caused my attitude to shift. I have been ripped off as often by underground companies as I have by overground papers and magazines. Hey, I've been ripped off by luminaries as diverse as Al Goldstein of **SCREW** and the San Francisco **CHRONICLE**. The editor of the pink asked me to do a piece about Dan O'Neill a few years back and I did it, knowing such pieces always pay \$35 bucks. I never got my check and I called to ask why out and he had the audacity to tell me over the phone that the paper didn't owe me any money, that the piece was promo. Well, I write a lot of free hype for people in my own newsletter, but not for any megabucks newspaper. I like Dan O'Neill and I've always enjoyed the conversations I've had with him at conventions, but I'm not his agent and I don't write ad copy for him. Burned for \$35 bucks. I never spoke to that editor again and we'd known each other for almost twenty years.

To answer your original question, Jay; well, of course this country is run by a handful of multi-national corporations with interlocking directorates and, obviously, those of us who are not mega-billionaires are powerless. We may have a small effect in our own circles, but none internationally. We can't change anything significantly and we never could. I talk to people who try to tell me the anti-war protests ended the war in Viet Nam and it's a waste of breath, because the military-industrial complex which is the economic base of the United States has never stopped being at war with some

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third world country somewhere since the days of the "Korean conflict." Just because you don't read about it in the paper or see it on television doesn't mean they're not into it. It only means governmental control over the major media has increased in the past decade to the point where a massacre can be sold to a brainwashed public as a *good war* while the technology used to execute that war is promoted and sold to client countries on the nightly news. Desert Storm was weapons testing at the expense of Iraq just as nuclear testing in the desert was weapons testing at the expense of the Navajo people in the mid-1940's. The whole bloody truth about the current state of capitalism is in ex-Attorney General Ramsey Clark's **THE FIRE THIS TIME**.

You talk about power and change, Jay, but I don't know what this could mean in the context of the way we live in this country. I have no illusions about power. I've always been a working person and when I have had power it has been within a specific context. When I was a college teacher I was told I could select the books I wanted to use in my courses, but that was a lie. I was being tested to see what books I would use and when I used books by writers like John Steinbeck and Richard Wright I was considered a communist. The son of one of the members of the House Un-American Activities Committee actually took my American literature course in order to report on me to his father. After the course was over, he confessed to me. He decided, he said, that I was not a communist. That was in wonderful Fresno back in the mid-sixties when anyone who had graduated from the University of California in Berkeley was considered a dangerous fire-breathing radical. For using Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison in one of my freshman courses, I got raised eyebrows from others on the faculty and some attitudes I considered humorous at the time. A woman told me she had picked up one of my freshman students. He had dropped my class, she said, because 'that Geerdes is teaching nigger literature.' Fact is, I was allowed to choose the books for my sections as long as I chose old standbys like Hemingway and Fitzgerald and Dickens and stayed away from contemporary reality. It being the sixties, I jumped right into whatever was current from acid-rock music at the Fillmore to Ken Kesey's novels. I was censured for using a sociological study of hip culture called **IT'S HAPPENING**. My power as a teacher was a joke. It didn't take me long to realize I was in that position to brainwash young people not to encourage independent thought. In the sixties I fought against the status quo, attacked conformity, advocated making all the waves possible,

power to the people, etc.; I was as full of shit as most of my contemporaries. As I watched the news I could see quite clearly that political protest was building a stronger and stronger police state in America. Ronald Reagan got into the presidency by attacking student protest and blabbing about law and order. That's the kind of change I saw. I'm still seeing it around Berkeley.

So power and change. I haven't got any power and I don't think I'm going to have much to do with changing anything. I think I have had some influence in the field of comics, but I doubt that it will be recognized until a future time. And comics are fantasy, not reality. You work for King Features, which is the comic strip establishment. Have you got any power? Make any changes? I don't think so. You told me the syndicate gets up to three thousand strip submissions a year and buys about six. When I look at the strips in my local paper, I don't see any changes at all. The new strips are predictable imitations of the old. Gary Trudeau is allowed to be political, but no one else is. Bobby London gets fired for his ideas. Gary Larson has a corner on weirdness. Today's strips are like movies or rock songs or rap--the idea is to do what is already being done, to do what is already successful, to imitate Barbie or Madonna or Clint Eastwood, but your imitation must give the syndicate or studio buyer the illusion of newness and freshness. Orphan Annie in the nineties, a space age Annie. An Eskimo boy and a stuffed polar bear. Calvin and Hobbes in an igloo.

The comic strips I see reflect a pseudo-reality. I'd love to see them changed. None of them reflect the reality of my world. On my street, there are black, Japanese, and white European families. There is a lesbian couple living near the corner and a couple of gay male artists across the street. I live in a multi-cultural, polyglot, multi-racial community and I never see anything like this reflected in the comic strips that run in the **Oakland Tribune**. I don't see the high school or college student community reflected. And don't tell me this is just Berkeley, because I know better. The same kind of communities exist in nearly every major American city in 1992. For a brief time in the early seventies there were underground comic strips drawn by artists like Bobby London and Gary Hallgren and Shary Flenniken and Gilbert Shelton and Dan O'Neill that reflected the reality of our changing subculture, but the best of these were quickly suppressed. Zippy was the only underground character to slide into syndication. Why? Perhaps because he confirms the establishment view that anyone who prefers an alternative reality to American business cult is mad. To

me, Zippy is a negation, not an affirmation of what was unique to underground comix.

Power? Ross Perot has power. If you can afford those million dollar a minute prime time spots, you can get 19% of the people in this country to vote for you. There were a lot of other candidates for president this year and they were not even mentioned by the network flacks. Change? Perot made a change in American politics. If he decides to maintain his third party organization, it may elect him president in 1996. After all, if you can buy 20% of the voters in a couple of months with a Will Rogers act, you can probably buy all of it in a couple of years. It's all money. In **DEEP COVER**, Levine tells the story of a DEA sting that netted the son of one of the biggest drug dealers in Bolivia. The father made Nixon an offer. He said he would pay *in cash* the National debt of the United States if Nixon would release his son. *And Nixon turned him down!* I love that story. Hey, without that two or three trillion dollar national debt, what would the government use to bribe the population every four years?

To slide back down the ladder to my newsletter. I don't think there has been much of a change in it. I tend to be more honest these days because I'm older and crustier. My early issues were filled with friendly hype and promo for the comix and my middle years did the same thing for another generation of guys with the newwave stuff, but behind the ink I thought pretty much as I do now. I'm cynical as hell about politics, national or local. I think the major comic book companies are crass and corrupt to the point of no return--that death of Superman bullshit was beyond the pale and the stores that held back copies to sell at inflated prices a couple of months down the road will have their special place in the lower circles of Dante's Inferno. I think the hot center of comix, located in the Bay Area for a few years in the sixties, is now in Europe where the medium is respected, and it seems logical to me that Shelton and Crumb now spend their time abroad. Crumb was interviewed in the **Washington POST** on May 25, 1992. *The Washington POST, for God's sake*. There is deep meaning there. I was in a Target store the other day and there were two giant counters covered with every possible manifestation of a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle you could imagine. There's deeper meaning.

Berkeley is turning into a mall. The yuppies have won. Some morning I will wake up and find out they have built a Toys 'R' Us around me. I'll have to dig my way out of a pile of naked Barbie dolls and GI Joes before I can have my morning tea. • Clay 12/92